MIRACLES

A MODERN VIEW

Floyd L. Darrow

PROPERTY OF
THE CINCINNATI BIBLE SEMINARY LIBRARY
GRADUATE
REFERENCE

G.M. Elliott Library
Cincinnati Bible College & Seminary
270 Glenway Avenue
P.O. Box 04320
Cincinnati, Ohio 45204-3200

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2022 with funding from
Kahle/Austin Foundation

https://archive.org/details/miraclesmodernvi0000floy

MIRACLES
A Modern View

By
FLOYD L. DARROW
AUTHOR OF
Through Science to God

INDIANAPOLIS
THE BOBBS-MERRILL COMPANY
PUBLISHERS

G.M. ELLIOTT LIBRARY
Cincinnati Bible College & Seminary

231.73
D254m

COPYRIGHT, 1926
BY THE BOBBS-MERRILL COMPANY

Printed in the United States of America

PRINTED AND BOUND
BY BRAUNWORTH & CO., INC.
BROOKLYN, NEW YORK

CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
I	Origin of the Miraculous	11
II	Four Prophets of the "Unchanging East"	23
III	Miracles of the Old Testament	48
IV	Miracles of the New Testament	87
V	Miracles of the Apocryphal Gospels	173
VI	From the Apostolic Age to the Reformation	185
VII	Miracles of the Catholic Church	211
VIII	Miracles of Healing	225
IX	Miracles and Science	247
X	Miracles and Religion	272
	Bibliography	281
	Index	287

PREFACE

Miracles: A Modern View seeks to trace for the layman the origin and development of the myth, legend and miracle of which all sacred literature and our own Bible in particular are so full. It is also believed that the clergy will cordially welcome this open and sincere discussion of a subject which has long been a controversial one in the field of religious inquiry. Nothing else so tends to clarify a problem as a thoughtful consideration of the way in which it arose. To appreciate the full significance of miracles in past and present religious thought, it is of fundamental importance to know how the framework of one religious system dovetails with that of another. To understand that Christianity was not a spontaneous and original product of Christ and his teaching is essential to any open-minded approach to the subject of miracles. Many do not know that, so far as its myth, legend, creed and dogma are concerned, it was built largely upon a scaffolding of paganism. It is the purpose of this book to point out some of the mutual relationships of religious origins and to show that the miracle-faith of all religions strikes its roots deep into a common subsoil of primitive immaturity and superstition. All religious progress must rest upon the truth. Any-

thing which is false, however venerable it may be with the sanctity of age, is an encumbrance. No one really wishes to cling to false beliefs. Every one is seeking the light, and nowhere else more earnestly than in the quest for spiritual realities. If some one asks, "Why discuss miracles at all?", the answer is that the pursuit of truth is the most important business in the world. While the truth may seem to be temporarily disturbing to some, it must be remembered that the disturbance of faith and world progress have always gone hand in hand. "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." That is the spirit of this book.

F. L. D.

MIRACLES

MIRACLES

CHAPTER I

ORIGIN OF THE MIRACULOUS

Miracles took their origin in that delightful faculty of imagination, that gift of fancy, that irrepressible proneness to wonder which in every childhood cradle of the race built up the marvelous background of prehistoric myth and legend into which the thought, the religion, the philosophy and the literature of every civilization have so deeply struck their roots. The unrestrained spirit of utter abandon, the perfect freedom of that far-off golden age of youthful exuberance, unfettered by the slightest suspicion of law or precedent, and the deep consciousness of an intimate kinship with all Nature gave to the world those wonderful stories which have become the priceless heritage of all mankind. Although these tales have for centuries been recognized as having only a slight historic basis, they will forever remain among the most precious possessions of the race. It is out of these deep spiritual convictions, this inherent genius for soul expression, that belief in the possibility of miracle arose and has been perpetuated, even down to the present day. Miracle-faith is a hall-mark of every religion. In-

deed, religion in its early stages would have been impossible without it.

If we wish to understand the historic setting in which belief in miracles arose, we must go back to the prescientific ages, which extend from the earliest times to Galileo and after. In those primitive centuries, anything could happen. That was as much an age of miracle as this is an age of science. Any natural event which people did not understand was a miracle. Phenomena which now admit of the simplest explanations were then marvelous happenings. This world was plastic to the touch of the Almighty. He could do anything he pleased with it. It was a capricious world. Most events happened in a usual way, but at any moment an extraordinary manifestation of Divine action might occur. No natural laws were broken, because none had been established. Those people were like the savages in uncivilized portions of the world to-day. Any of our modern inventions are miracles to a savage, when seen for the first time. Before the locomotive, the automobile or airplane he falls down and worships or flees in terror. In those far-off times of primitive ignorance, men were fond of the supernatural. Superstition was the chief characteristic of their philosophy of life. Even in Bible times people had not advanced much beyond this state of "luminous surprise." An atmosphere of psychological buoyancy was everywhere. People lived in daily expectation of wonderful happenings. Every event was shrouded in mystery. If miracles had not hap-

pened under such conditions, it would be a cause for inquiry. A deity who could not perform them was unworthy of worship. A prophet who was not credited with the performance of many wonderful works failed in leadership. Miracles were common to the civilizations of all early peoples. As we shall see, they did not originate with the Hebrew people, and many of the wonder-tales of their Bible were borrowed from the sacred literatures of other peoples. A supreme error of orthodox thought is the utterly false assumption that the presence of a miracle in the Bible makes it true, whereas the occurrence of a precisely similar miracle in any other sacred literature is branded as false. As a matter of fact, they all strike their roots deep into the same subsoil of primitive ignorance and superstition.

However, before we discuss the miracles which occur in the great religious systems of the world, let us go back to the early ages of the earth and out of the inextricably tangled background of prehistoric myth and legend attempt to discover some of the characteristics of that childlike type of mind which failed utterly to distinguish between fact and fancy and to which belief in "signs and wonders" was fundamental to that incurably religious instinct prevalent among primitive peoples everywhere.

As E. B. Tylor has said, "Savages have been for untold ages, and still are, living in the myth-making stage of the human mind."* In these an-

**Primitive Culture*, 2nd edition, I, p. 283.

cient myths and those of savage tribes to-day, we see much that is both rational and irrational. When a savage tells us that some wise being taught his people how to make fire, the use of the bow and arrow, the barbing of hooks, how to make a canoe and many more of the simple arts of life, we can understand him. But when this savage goes on to say that the wise being who taught these things was a spider or a beaver or a rabbit or an eagle, we are confronted with that irrational element of pure fancy which no longer seems intelligible. When we read, too, in the Indian Vedas, of Indra, the Lord of Thunder, who animates the whirlwind and directs the storm, a god who honors righteousness and gives wealth to the pious, we can relate such ideas to our own religious experience. But when it is made to appear that this god changed himself into a quail or a ram and was subject to the most abject physical terror, we are again face to face with that myth-making faculty which in every age has been the source of miracle. When we turn to the religious traditions of ancient Greece, we find again both rational and irrational elements. We can understand that idealism which represents the gods as beautiful and wise beings and beholds Zeus as the protector of the righteous and the dispenser of good and evil fortune to men. But when the goddess Artemis is represented as a she bear and again as a star, or Zeus is made to take the shape of a swan, or in the form of an ant or a cuckoo to make love to the women of the earth, we see budding forth that be-

lief in the impossible which is a characteristic obsession of primitive minds and from which the orthodox believers in religious dogma have not even yet been able to shake themselves free.

Possibly the first mark of the savage mind is that confused and nebulous state of thought which fails to distinguish between the animate and the inanimate. Human, animal, vegetable and mineral objects, all seem, to his undeveloped mind, on the same plane of life, passion and reason. The savage, too, draws no sharp line between himself and his external environment. It seems perfectly plausible to him that he should be kin, in the most literal sense, to animals, plants and heavenly bodies. To the sun, moon and stars and to the wind, beasts, birds and fishes, he attributes human speech and human feelings. Even to stones and rocks, he assigns the qualities of sex.

Magic and sorcery, too, have played a conspicuous rôle in shaping savage thought and opinion. Since the savage regards the external world as sensible and rational, it seems perfectly logical to him that all things should obey the commands of tribal chiefs, jugglers, conjurers, or medicine men. The supernatural power of the tribal conjurer is but little less than that of the gods. Animals hold converse with him and become his servants. Rocks open at his order and rivers dry up. The magician may inflict or heal diseases, and he may command the weather, bringing sunshine or rain, lightning and thunder at will. Like the gods, he may assume

the form of any animal he chooses, and he can even change his friends or enemies into animal forms.

And then again, the savage has an intuitive belief in the existence of the souls of the dead. Being at the beck and call of the conjurer, these souls may be summoned to his aid, giving advice and conferring upon him magical power. It is believed, too, that the spirits of the departed may migrate freely into the bodies of beasts, and in particular into those of the species which is thought to be united in bonds of kinship and friendship with the tribe to which they belonged when on earth. Savage fancy also builds a spirit-land, a place of abode for the dead, which may be either a paradise or a gloomy realm of unhappiness and shadow.

The savage believes in ghosts. He assigns a ghost to all objects, animate or inanimate. The strength of a man is often identified with his spirit and is regarded as separable from the body and capable of being transferred to an external object. This spiritual essence, it is believed, resides in a particular part of the body, as for instance the strength of Samson being attributed to his hair. Savages hold that often an individual may detach his soul from his body at will and allow it to roam at large, sometimes in the form of a bird or other animal.

The savage in his ignorance believes all death is unnatural. Man was not made to die. But, when he does do so, it is attributed to some misdeed or to the act of a hostile spirit. Thus belief in the resur-

rection of the dead is perfectly natural to the primitive mind.

Above all else, the savage mind is curious and credulous. Within his dull brain the first faint spark of the scientific spirit has begun to glow. He wonders about natural phenomena and wishes to give himself a satisfactory account of the world as he finds it. Like a child, the savage is eager to ask questions, but he is easily satisfied. His extraordinary credulity makes the work of his imagination pass as legal tender in the realm of reality. The savage invents *stories*. He has a story to unravel almost every riddle of the world. And he may always invoke a supernatural power to cut the knot of any problem. The movements of the heavenly bodies, the coming of day and night, the origin of the world, the creation of animal and plant life, the rise of the tribe and tribal customs, the inventions of the arts,—all these and much more are accounted for in stories. Childlike simplicity, unbounded faith in the supernatural, utter ignorance of all scientific law, the God-given faculty of imagination and an inherent tendency to speculation combine to make of the savage an incomparable master of the art of fiction and self-deception.

In speaking of the practise of magic by savage people, Frazer in *The Golden Bough** says, "The reader may well be tempted to ask, How was it that intelligent men did not sooner detect the fallacy of magic? How could they continue to cherish ex-

**The Golden Bough*, p. 59.

pectations that were invariably doomed to disappointment? With what heart persist in playing venerable antics that led to nothing, and mumbling solemn balderdash that remained without effect? Why cling to beliefs which were so flatly contradicted by experience? How dare to repeat experiments that had failed so often? The answer seems to be that the fallacy was far from easy to detect, the failure by no means obvious, since in many, perhaps in most cases, the desired event did actually follow, at a longer or shorter interval, the performance of the rite which was designed to bring it about; and a mind of more than common acuteness was needed to perceive that, even in these cases, the rite was not necessarily the cause of the event. A ceremony intended to make the wind blow or the rain fall, or to work the death of an enemy, will always be followed, sooner or later, by the occurrence it is meant to bring to pass; and primitive man may be excused for regarding the occurrence as a direct result of the ceremony, and the best possible proof of its efficacy."

As already indicated, the medicine man of a savage tribe has all miracles at his command. He rules the heavens, he possesses the power of flight, he may become visible or invisible at will, he may assume any form he chooses and at pleasure resume his human shape. Spirits are subject to his control, he can converse with the dead and even descend into their abodes. And upon the gods of myth, savage man confers the same miraculous and

supernatural powers which he claims for the medicine man.

The mythology of classic Greece took its beginning in that immense background of savage myth and magic which is to be found in every cradle of civilization. Lying far behind the time of Homer must have been an age of barbarism in which the ancestors of the Greeks developed that type of myths by which savage people, everywhere and in all ages, seek to explain the origin of the world and the nature of its phenomena. Not only is this shown in their myths, but Greek life in general, and in particular Greek ritual, teemed with surviving examples of customs and of practises characteristic of the most backward and barbarous races. Beneath the surface of Greek life everywhere are to be found relics of savagery. Even the Greeks themselves believed in a savage origin of mankind. Thus, a writer of the school of Euripides exclaims,* "The time hath been, yea, it *hath* been, when men lived like the beasts, dwelling in mountain caves and clefts unvisited of the sun. . . . Then they broke not the soil with ploughs nor by aid of iron, but the weaker man was slain to make the supper of the stronger." Aristotle held a similar view.

Likewise of Egypt. Although there is an unbridged interval between those master builders by the ancient Nile and their predecessors, the chippers of paleolithic flints found in the river drift,

*Moschion, quoted in Lang's *Myth, Ritual and Religion*, Vol. I, p. 249.

there is no doubt that the mythology of this mighty people of antiquity had its beginning in the folk lore of a savage ancestry. As Andrew Lang has said, "as one great river of mysterious source flows throughout all Egypt, so through the brakes and jungles of her religion flows one great myth from a distant fountain-head, the myth of Osiris."* The lives and beliefs of these brilliant people were steeped in myth.

And so we might continue. People everywhere have come up from a lowly ancestry. The overwhelming mass of evidence in substantiation of the *law of evolution* leaves no doubt of that. But what has this to do with miracles? Just this—that belief in magic and the supernatural is a part of the racial legacy. It was bred into the mental fiber of primitive people through uncounted centuries of unquestioned faith and practise. Not only the possibility, but the actuality, of miraculous events constituted an essential element of all religions.

With all our pride of learning, we still possess many of the characteristics of the savage mind. Like the vestigial structures of our physical anatomy, these mental relics of a barbarous past still persist in our brain cells. Although we live in an age of superscience, many of us are unable to banish the miraculous from our picture of earlier ages, particularly from that of Bible times. We freely deny the occurrence of miracle to-day, but, so tightly does the savage strain in our mental ances-

*Lang's *Myth, Ritual and Religion*, Vol. II, pp. 107-108.

try yet grip us that we think of those distant times as a golden age of miraculous events. Such a faith, however, is due to an ages-old racial memory coming down to us from the childhood cradle of our ancestral home. It is, indeed, at one and the same time a relic of barbarism and an evidence of man's divinity.

The twilight shadows of the dawn still obscure the minds of men. And it is but natural, for geologically and racially speaking we are not yet far removed from savagery. The period of apprenticeship served by our ancestors in the savage state was vastly longer than that which has elapsed since the dawn of civilization. As James Harvey Robinson has said, "We are all born wholly uncivilized." Miracle is primitive man's answer to the eternal challenge of the Infinite. To most of us the marvelous achievements of science are veritable miracles. Did we not know that the scientist in his laboratory understands them and has robbed them of their mystery, we should reverence them as such. To what one of us do not the phenomena of radioactivity and the transmission and reception of the human voice and music for hundreds of miles through the boundless ether seem like miracles? Despite the fact that we know it all to be in perfect obedience to natural law, as rigidly exact as mathematics, there hovers about any such accomplishment, even to the most sophisticated, a wondrous charm of mystery that is inescapable.

And so we may pardon primitive minds in the

prescientific ages of the earth for exercising their God-given faculty of creative imagination in constructing an artificial world of miracle. Although the early hours of the dawn are passing, the morning of intellectual achievement is not yet far enough advanced to permit much pride of superiority.

CHAPTER II

FOUR PROPHETS OF THE "UNCHANGING EAST"

What a wealth of the miraculous forever associates itself with that ancient land of enchantment and mystery, the "unchanging East"! The world's great religions and philosophies have sprung from the wisdom of the East. Since the dawn of history the impassive, dreamy, spiritually-minded peoples of those Oriental lands have supplied the well-springs of religious thought. There, brooding throughout the centuries on the deep mysteries of life and the hidden meanings of creation, these children of a perpetual dawn, disregarding material progress and living close to Nature, have in all times sought to attain to a knowledge of the eternal verities of existence. The natural charm and beauty prevailing in much of the country of those ancient cradles of civilization afford a fitting setting to that indescribable sadness characteristic of the Oriental mind. In such an atmosphere, surcharged with primitive folk-lore, ancient wisdom and philosophy, pervaded with religious speculation and soul-searchings, and overspread with an inexpressible beauty and sadness, it is but natural that there should have arisen those miraculous elements

which have become the common heritage of the world's great religions.

About the lives of four semi-mythical, semi-historic figures of these ages-old lands of spiritual visions clusters in the utmost profusion that wealth of extravagant statement, legend and reputed miracle which have come to be the characteristic tokens of all sacred tradition. Named in the probable chronological order of their respective appearances, these leaders of religious thought are Zoroaster, Krishna, Buddha, and Mahomet. Moses and Jesus will be discussed in other portions of the book. Of the four first named, Mahomet comes closest to our own time and is an entirely historical character, while Krishna is the most nearly mythical of all. Nevertheless, we must remember that, though he be entirely a myth, just as some eminent scholars believe the Christ to be, his followers had implicit faith in the actuality and divinity of his life, and his influence on the Eastern mind has been great. Confucius is not included because little of myth and miracle is associated with his memory.

At the very outset of this discussion of the miraculous let us make one point clear—nowhere from the earliest times down to the current miracles recorded as late as the very beginning of the modern era, do we find these events reported in first-hand documents. They always originated in the imaginations of over-zealous, deeply-spiritual people, at longer or shorter intervals after the reputed happenings. Wherever in sacred or theological lit-

erature we find descriptions of events written down at the very time of their happening, there is a complete absence of miracle. And the farther we get from the alleged events being narrated, the larger the miraculous element becomes. As we shall see, this is abundantly illustrated in the Old Testament of the Bible.

The purpose of the present chapter is to show something of the atmosphere of the East in which our own sacred writings were compiled and to make clear the traditional view that all religion must be permeated with miracle.

ZOROASTER

All classical antiquity is agreed as to the reality of the personage of Zoroaster. To the writers of Greece and Rome he was the arch-representative of the Magi, the wise men of Iran, or ancient Persia. For many centuries, the name of Zoroaster has been synonymous with Persian wisdom, and he is generally regarded as the founder of the Magian priesthood. Although he sometimes seems to have been more famous for his magic arts than for his religious and moral teaching, he takes equal rank in this latter respect with Buddha, Confucius and Socrates. Some of the great thoughts of Christianity were voiced by him centuries before they became a part of the religious systems of prophet and theologian.

Like Buddha, Zoroaster was actuated by the high ideals of relieving human suffering and redeeming men from lives of sin. Both became founders of

great religions. Buddha put forth a creed of renunciation and repose. Zoroaster preached a doctrine of struggle, action and reform. Buddha sought release from pain and sorrow in *Nirvana* (an absorption of the soul in the divine). Zoroaster contended for the triumphant domination of sin and wickedness by man. But, while millions still adhere to the faith of Buddha, only a handful recognize the prophet teacher of Iran as their spiritual guide.

Through the mist of fable and legend gathered about the figure of Zoroaster, scholars descry an undoubted historical character. By some authorities he is placed in the seventh century before the Christian Era, and by others at a much earlier period. Doctor E. W. West gives the traditionary dates as B. C. 660-583.* If these dates are approximately correct, we see that the Jews were carried into Babylonian captivity and therefore into possible contact with the teachings of this prophet of ancient Persia at about the time of his death. The Persian wars with Greece, too, brought the Western world into contact with the wisdom of the East and the teachings of Zoroaster. That these teachings influenced the shaping of our own Bible is more than likely.

Tradition traces the ancestry of Zoroaster through a royal line back to the Persian Adam, the father of all mankind. In the Zoroastrian scriptures

*Quoted in *Zoroaster, the Prophet of Ancient Iran,* by A. V. Williams Jackson.

are found passages tending to show that the sage's coming had been predicted ages before, just as is the case with Christ and other religious leaders. Miracles, too, are told regarding his birth. It was a miraculous birth, attended by the glory of heaven. His conception was immaculate, just as Buddha's and Christ's and that of many others is said to have been. We are told that for three days and nights before the birth of Zoroaster the whole village became luminous and a divine radiance, surpassing the brilliancy of the sun, encircled his father's house. Supernatural signs and omens, accompanied by wonders and prodigies, heralded his advent. Just as a star appears, a comet blazes forth, or the earth is shaken at the coming of other saviors, we read in the Avesta that all Nature rejoiced at Zoroaster's birth. The very trees and rivers participated in the universal thrill of gladness that shot through the world. Ahriman, the Prince of Darkness, and his terror-stricken demons took flight into the depths of the earth. It is reported, too, how the fiends strove to prevent his birth and what a shout of joy rose when life triumphed. Especially, do these weavers of myth recount the loud laughter which burst from the child when he came into the world. This tradition of the child's laughter is as old as Pliny and is current in the Eastern writings. Pliny also states that the future prophet's brain throbbed so violently as to repel the hand laid upon his head—a presage of future wisdom.

Moreover, it is asserted that Zoroaster's birth was in answer to the pious prayers addressed by his father to Haoma. As a young man his fitness for the prophetic mission he was to undertake was divinely recognized, and Ormuzd, the Supreme God of the Persians, is represented as selecting and divinely inspiring this man of destiny as his own messenger to a sinful world.

No sooner was the child born than demons and wizards sought his death. But from these foes he is preserved by divine intervention, as well as from the murderous plots of Durasrobo, the Herod of that day. On one occasion an attempt was made to burn the child in a huge fire, but his life was saved by a miracle. When a wicked old man sought his death by placing him in front of a herd of cattle, an ox stood guard over this divine being until the animals had passed. When the attempt was again made with horses, it also failed. Even wolves whose young had been killed did not harm him. In their very den he was suckled by a sheep.

Of course, these tales are mythical, just as are those in the Apocrypha regarding the childhood of Christ and scores of others told about other religious leaders. Even as Christ, too, confounded the doctors in the Temple, so did Zoroaster put to route the wise men of his time who sought to argue with him.

The years of his life from fifteen to thirty constituted a period of preparation, just as they did in the life of Christ. Little is known of them. It

is reported that his abode was in a cave upon a mountain and that it was illuminated with a supernatural light and splendor, even as the lightning and the thunder hovered about the summit of Sinai, and its sides were shrouded in thick smoke. Just as the voice of the Lord spoke with Moses, so did the Persian God speak with Zoroaster in the forest and on the mountain.

At the age of thirty came the divine light of revelation. In a holy trance his soul was led into the presence of God, Ahura Mazda. At that time he ceases to behold "his own shadow upon the ground on account of the great brilliancy of the archangels."* In this revelation, the prophet was instructed by God himself in the great doctrines of the Faith. Marvelous signs were revealed unto him, and he was initiated into the most sublime secrets.

Preaching wherever he went, ten years of wandering and struggle passed before he won his first convert. Just as Elijah pronounced the doom of King Ahaziah because he did not recognize the God of Israel, so did Zoroaster call down eternal death upon a ruler who refused to do his bidding.

Zoroaster enjoyed six more conferences with the archangels in heaven. Each is referred to as a "vision." If any credence at all is to be attached to these alleged divine events, it is certain that they must be regarded as apocalyptic visions. After the last, he was able miraculously to withstand the

Zoroaster, the Prophet of Ancient Iran, A. V. Williams Jackson.

powers of evil. On one occasion, two infidel rulers who refused to adopt the Faith were caught up into the air by the winds of heaven and held suspended there until birds of prey, flying from every point of the compass, had in response to Zoroaster's prayer torn the flesh from their bones.

At the meeting of Zoroaster with Prince Vishtasp, the roof miraculously parted to permit the entrance of the prophet, and he held in his hand a "cube of fire with which he played without hurting him." To prove to the prince the divine truth of his mission, he was compelled to submit his person to an ordeal with molten metal. A miracle wrought by Zoroaster prevented his death at the hands of Vishtasp and, upon the subsequent conversion of the prince, three archangels came down from heaven to celebrate the event and to promise to this ruler of ancient Persia a life of one hundred and fifty years. A glimpse of heaven, too, was revealed to the fortunate king, who thenceforth became the patron of the prophet.

Innumerable miracles are told of this Oriental wonder worker. On one occasion, when an aged Brahman sage sought to confound him, it is related that Zoroaster was apprised in advance by God himself of what questions would be asked and given divinely inspired answers. In like manner were wise men from India and Greece miraculously refuted. On one of Zoroaster's journeys, he directed an attendant to drop the juice of a certain plant into a blind man's eyes, whereupon the man was

able to see. To him, by virtue of divine revelation, was ascribed power to heal the sick, drive out pestilence, overcome the demon and disable socery and witchcraft. Little that is attributed to the miraculous powers of the saints and prophets of any age are lacking in the accounts of Zoroaster's life and works. That his followers in his own and later times believed him to be divinely led there is no question. Certain it is that devout belief in the reality and divinity of his life deeply influenced a host of disciples for many centuries after his time.

Even in the prophet's death evidence of divine favor is not wanting. On the eve of a great battle between Prince Vishtasp and an opposing king, one of Zoroaster's followers was told in a heavenly vision of the fortunes of the ensuing conflict, the temporary defeat and ultimate victory. True to the vision, the prophet himself fell a martyr at the hands of the invading foes as he stood in the presence of the altar's holy flame. As he did so, the prophetic mantle fell upon the chancellor of the king, divinely ordaining him as priestly successor, even as the mantle of Elijah fell upon Elisha.

Still, the miraculous events which attended the prophet's life did not cease with death, but wonders and prodigies due to his spiritual influence continued to be witnessed throughout the reign of the patron king.

Of course no one credits these miraculous tales to-day. And yet they are not to be branded as deliberate falsehoods. At the bottom of many of

them no doubt there is a nucleus of truth. Such stories are simply a beautiful legacy from the delightful myth-making faculty characteristic of primitive peoples everywhere. Western people today fail to appreciate the wealth of fanciful and extravagant statement typical of the Oriental mind. The pity and the tragedy of it is that in later times men ever have identified such products of creative imagination with literal truth.

However, we must remember that these miracles regarding Zoroaster are just as true as are those told of any other religious leader, not even excepting Christ. They all have a common origin and are products of the same racial psychology. What right has any person to say that the miracles contained in his own sacred literature are true and that all others are false? And that, even in those instances, which are many, in which numerous parallels to a particular miracle are to be found in other sacred writings?

That is the crux of the whole difficulty. We brand as spurious everything outside of our slender stream of truth, or fiction, utterly forgetting that all such streams, so to speak, are watered by clouds evaporated from a common ocean. That only one of these contains the living water of truth, while all others reek with error and falsehood, is a view so absurd that we stand aghast that any should give it credence in this twentieth century of enlightenment. To assert that the Divine Immanence of all creation has revealed himself in only one sacred lit-

erature is to make of the God of the universe a provincial deity.

And so we must conclude that just as much significance is to be attached to the miracles said to have been wrought by Zoroaster as to those attributed to any other religious prophet. They are all evidences of the divinity of the human spirit, but that the wonder tales of one literature are more divinely true than are those of another is an unwarrantable assumption.

KRISHNA

One of the most beautiful and characteristic beliefs of primitive peoples, everywhere and in all ages, is in the incarnation of deities. In far away India, centuries before the coming of Christ, the people believed in *Avatars*, or successive incarnations of the Hindu god Vishnu. As many as ten are enumerated in their sacred literature, of whom Krishna, the Savior, has come to occupy by far the largest place in the thought and religion of these Eastern peoples. Sir William Jones, first President of the Royal Asiatic Society, said of him, "Krishna continues to this hour the darling god of the Indian woman."* And Reverend D. O. Allen, missionary for twenty-five years in India, said, "He [Krishna] was greater than, and distinct from, all the *Avatars* which had only a portion of the divinity in them, while he was the very person of Vishnu himself in human form."†

Asiatic Researches, Vol. I, p. 260.
†Allen's *India*, p. 397.

According to the Hindu scriptures, Krishna was born of a virgin named Devaki, who, because of her purity, was selected by Vishnu himself to become "the mother of God" and the savior of the world. It is reported that, upon the announcement of the coming event, a chorus of angels exclaimed: "In the delivery of this favored woman, all nature shall have cause to exult."* In the sacred book of the Hindoos, called *Vishnu Purana,* we read that "No person could bear to gaze upon Devaki, from the light that invested her, and those who contemplated her radiance felt their minds disturbed. The gods, invisible to mortals, celebrated her praises continually from the time that Vishnu was contained in her person."†

That millions of people in the East should believe implicitly in the divinity and miraculous birth of Krishna is just as understandable as that millions of others should believe the same of Christ. Of the two, the tradition of Krishna is vastly older than is that of Christ.

The myth and legend surrounding the name of Krishna make of him "a warlike prince, a hero, equally invincible in war and love." Like every other incarnate deity, he performed miracles, and these are cherished to this day by the peoples of the East as tenaciously as are those in our own Bible by Christians everywhere. That the miracles of one deity have their origin in those same psychological

**History of Hindostan, by* Thomas Maurice, Vol. II, p. 329.
†*Vishnu Purana,* p. 502.

habits of racial thinking as have those of every other deity constitutes the mote that obscures the vision of every orthodox follower of any particular religious prophet.

Granting that miracle stories are ever true, who shall say which shall be believed and which shall be declared eternally false?

Some of the outstanding points in the story of Krishna follow: The birth of this Indian savior was announced in the heavens by *his star*. On the morning of his coming, "the quarters of the horizon were irradiate with joy, as if moonlight was diffused over the whole earth, and the spirits and nymphs of heaven danced and sang." He was born in a cave, which at the moment of birth was "splendidly illuminated, and the countenances of his father and his mother emitted rays of glory." Shepherds came to adore him, prostrating themselves before the heaven-born child. Recognizing him as divine, they presented the child with gifts of sandalwood and perfumes. Wise men who had seen his star came to worship him. Krishna's father was warned in a dream to "fly with the child to Gacool, across the river Jumna, as the reigning monarch sought his life." This wicked Herod of his time ordered the "massacre in all his states of all the children of the male sex, born during the night of the birth of Krishna." Krishna, too, had his "John the Baptist" in the prophet Rama, who was born a short time before him and whose life was sought by the ruling monarch. As a youth, he performed prod-

igies equal to any related of Christ in the Apocryphal Book of the "Infancy." On one occasion he restored to life some playfellows who had died from the sting of a serpent. One of his first miracles after reaching maturity was the curing of a leper. At the death of Krishna appeared "calamities and bad omens of every kind. A black circle surrounded the moon, and the sun was darkened at noonday; the sky rained fire and ashes; flames burned dusky and livid; demons committed depredations on the earth; at sunrise and sunset, thousands of figures were to be seen skirmishing in the air; and spirits were to be seen on all sides." Krishna descended into hell, rose again from the dead and ascended bodily into heaven. It is believed by his followers that in the latter days he will appear among mortals "as an armed warrior, riding a white horse. At his approach, the sun and moon will be darkened, the earth will tremble, and the stars fall from the firmament." At that time he will judge the dead. Krishna is the second person in the Hindoo Trinity. Krishna said, "I am the sustainer of the world, its friend and Lord. I am its way and refuge."

No one can read this account of Krishna without noting the very striking parallelism between it and the life of Christ. That such stories regarding many religious prophets were rife among the peoples of the East during New Testament times and had been for centuries preceding is written large in Oriental literature. The only mysterious thing now regarding these alleged events is the strong

hold which belief in miracle still has upon the average mind.

Whether Krishna actually lived or not, belief in him waxes strong among a host of followers, and it is thought that the tradition of this Eastern miracle worker was current in Palestine in the time of Christ and after.

Such traditions as the foregoing set the pattern for all later biographers of religious prophets. If, in that unscientific age, miracle-working had come to be the distinguishing indication of divine guidance, all such leaders must perform miracles and none must be allowed to be outdone by any other. These writers did not consciously falsify. They only attributed to their hero what they honestly believed must have been true of so great a teacher of men. And, writing as they did long after the event, they made free use of that wealth of traditionary myth and legend which sprang up about every great personage in those fertile soils of credulity and superstition.

BUDDHA

Although there are said to have been several Buddhas, in Gautama Buddha we have the most illustrious of these heaven-sent saviors of the Far East. Usually placed in the sixth century B. C., Gautama is represented as having been born of the Virgin Maya, or Mary, and is said to have come to earth from his home in Paradise out of compassion for the sins and miseries of mankind. His birth

was foretold in four wondrous dreams and announced in the heavens by the appearance of the "Messianic Star." Miraculous events heralded his coming. All Nature seemed to rejoice. Fountains bubbled forth from the dry earth. The hills and trees and flowers exuberated joy. The earth shook, dead trees spontaneously sprouted and bore flowers and fruit. Gentle breezes stirred the forests. Wild beasts became harmless. Spirits caused a perfumed rain to fall upon the land and a mellow light of wondrous beauty illumined the whole earth. Tens of thousands of angels thronged in the air, showering flowers upon the new-born babe and filling all space with heavenly music. For a time, the sun and moon stood still. Young children, deaf and blind from birth, were that day restored to sight and hearing.

A seer of the time foretold that this child of God would become a heavenly teacher, putting an end to evil and bringing to mankind deliverance from sin and misery. Another of the wise men is reported to have said, "As I was coming on the sun's way, I heard angels in space rejoicing because the king had born to him a son who would teach the true way of emancipation from sin."* Thereupon the seer ascended into space and disappeared.

On one occasion, when at a festival the nurses of the royal child had carelessly left him until the sun was low in the west, to the amazement of all it was discovered that the shadow of the tree under which

A Question of Miracles, by Loren H. Whitney.

he lay, unlike the shadows of the other trees, had not moved, but remained to protect the young prince. As a lad, Buddha's learning equaled that of his teachers, even as Christ confounded with his wisdom the wise men in the Temple.

Although surrounded with every luxury and pleasure that an Oriental monarch could provide for his son, Buddha, impelled by the deep urge of his heavenly mission, when still a young man, forsook his royal home and become a wanderer, searching far and wide for truth. Despite the prison bars of a watchful father, when the time arrived for Buddha to leave his palace, bolted doors miraculously opened for his escape and a fully caparisoned horse appeared to bear him on his journey. This story suggests the miraculous deliverance of Peter by the "Angel of the Lord," as, bound with chains, he lay sleeping between two soldiers in his prison cell. For Peter, too, the gate of the city magically opened for his escape.

For many years Buddha was a wanderer on the face of the earth, forever seeking that knowledge, wisdom and peace which should bring to himself, and through him to his followers, release from sin and misery. Like Christ he wandered in the wilderness. Miracles never ceased to attend his journeyings. Angels came down from heaven to converse with him. An angel actually held down the branches of a tree, we are told, and thereby saved the prophet from being drowned in the Ganges. At one time in crossing a swollen stream, he walked, not on the

water itself, but on a cushion of air above it. One day as Buddha was pondering over the sorrow existing in the earth, an angel appeared before him, and, after delivering a message from the Lord, gradually disappeared and ascended into heaven. We are told, too, that when Buddha himself appeared before an audience, he could not only change his color and form at will, but also vanish into thin air.

Early in his wanderings, Buddha was tempted by Mara, the Evil One. Mara said unto him, "Go not forth to adopt a religious life, and in seven days thou shalt become an emperor of the world."* But Buddha would not heed the Evil One and replied, "Get thee away from me." When Mara had left, "the skies rained flowers, and delicious odors pervaded the air." Buddha fasted for a long period, just as Christ fasted for forty days and nights. At the expiration of his wanderings, Buddha was baptized, and at that time the Spirit of the Lord descended upon him. Toward the close of his life, on the summit of Mount Pandawa, he was transfigured and his person shone "as the brightness of the sun and moon." When Buddha died and had been buried, the "coverings of his body unrolled themselves, and the lid of his coffin was opened by supernatural powers," whereupon he ascended bodily into heaven.

The followers of Buddha believe that in the latter days he is to come again upon the earth to

**Bible Myths and Their Parallels in Other Religions*, by T. W. Doane, p. 292. (Succeeding quotations in next two paragraphs from same source.)

restore the world to order and happiness. He is the "Supreme Being," the "Eternal One," who at that time will judge of the dead.

Among Buddha's reputed utterances, we find the following: "Let all the sins that were committed in this world fall on me, that the world may be delivered." "Hide your good deeds, and confess before the world the sins you have committed." "Though the heavens were to fall to earth, and the great world be swallowed up and pass away; though Mount Sumera were to crack to pieces, and the great ocean be dried up, yet, Ananda, be assured, the words of Buddha are true." "The motive of all our actions should be pity or love for our neighbor."

Of Buddha, Doctor T. W. Doane, in his *Bible Myths and Their Parallels in Other Religions,* says, "There is no reason to believe that he ever arrogated to himself any higher authority than that of a teacher of religion, but, *as in modern factions,* there were readily found among his followers those who carried his peculiar tenets much further than their founder. These, not content with lauding during his lifetime the noble deeds of their teacher, exalted him, within a quarter of a century after his death, to a place among their deities—worshiping as a God one they had known only as a simple-hearted, earnest, truth-seeking philanthropist."*

And so it was with Buddha as with every other great personage of the Orient in those early centuries of myth and legend. He was undoubtedly one

**Bible Myths and Their Parallels in Other Religions,* p. 298.

of the great religious prophets of all time, but the mass of miracle which has clustered about his memory must be regarded as entirely false. Still, the miracles of every religion stand on the same footing. They doubtless served a useful purpose in the evolution of religious thought, but that usefulness has long since passed.

MAHOMET

Coming down to much more recent times, we find the miracle faculty still strong among the followers of Mahomet (Mohammed), who lived from 570-632 A. D. We are not concerned here with the man himself or the religion which he founded, save to note that he was undoubtedly a devout man who honestly believed that he had been commissioned in revelations from on High to become a religious prophet unto his people.

The interesting thing to observe with regard to this great leader of men is that, while he himself, like Jesus of Nazareth, did not claim to perform miracles, his devoted followers have ascribed to him miraculous gifts of extraordinary power. But these alleged miracles all sprang up in the imaginations of pious souls after the death of the prophet and they increase in number and in the utter impossibility of actual occurrence the farther we get from the events described. The example of the Fathers of the early church in continuing for centuries to intertwine their religious worship with a mesh of miracles may have influenced the followers of Ma-

homet. Certain it is that the spinning of miracles did not cease until many centuries later. The perpetration of these pious frauds continued with constantly increasing zeal in religions everywhere until the coming of the age of science reduced faith in them to an utter absurdity.

At his birth, innumerable stars and meteors fell, and in his youth Mahomet exhibited all those precocious tendencies customarily attributed to religious prophets. On one occasion he made a carpet, a whip and a donkey respectively speak and proclaim him the prophet of the "one adorable God." Once, when on a journey, a cloud constantly attended the prophet, protecting him from the hot sun, stopping wherever he did and shielding him from a violent sand storm of the desert. The rocks and the mountains saluted him. We read in the *Life of Mohammed,* written by James L. Merrick in 1850, that "his might extended to the utmost bounds of the universe, earth and heaven, seas, mountains and deserts. . . . To him the Most High opened the celestial gates of form and meaning, and his vision always extended to the kingdom above. Hosts of angels, company after company, were sent to serve him, whom he saw and with whom he conversed familiarly. Light of divine mercy from the pillars of the empyrean, and beams of the divine sun of glory, completely illumined him."*

When on a dark night, as the prophet ascended a high mountain, he was attacked by enemies, the

**Life of Mohammed,* by James L. Merrick.

mountain interposed a wall between him and his foes. This was repeated forty-seven times, and at the end of the descent the mountain opened and swallowed up the enemies of the faith. At the command of Mahomet, the moon was cleft in twain and immediately restored. Once he brought back the sun after he had set, and at another time caused him to linger above the horizon an hour after his usual time of setting. At the imprecation of the prophet, rain was restrained from falling upon the land of the tribe of Muzr for a long period, resulting in a dire famine remembered unto this day. He also produced rain to break a drought at Medeenah. On his passing the gates of Mekkah, every rock and tree reverently bowed before him and saluted him as a prophet of God. When journeying in the wilderness, two trees moved before him as a screen. To convince a doubting Arab of his divine mission, he called a cluster of dates from a tree and then remanded it to its original position. He often made stones and trees speak. He caused a camel, claimed by each of two Arabs, to open his mouth and declare unto which one of them he belonged. A man was healed of leprosy by bathing in a pool into which Mahomet had injected some saliva. The sick for whom he prayed immediately became well. A foot amputated in battle was restored through the efficacy of the prophet's saliva. A man who did him a favor was blessed with a life of three hundred and twenty years. On one occasion, he fed forty thousand men with a few dates, and enough were left to

fill many vessels. On the supplication of the father, he brought a little girl of five to life.

The prophet's dream of a night-time journey to Jerusalem is seriously described as an actual visit in person. A mysterious animal, the Borâk, conveyed him from the temple in Mecca to that in the holy city of Palestine. In company with Gabriel, he ascended successively to the seven heavens, receiving and returning the homage of the patriarchs, the prophets and the angels in their various mansions. Proceeding alone beyond the seventh heaven, he passed the veil of unity and, approaching within two bow-shots of the throne, felt a cold that pierced him to the heart, when his shoulder was touched by the hand of God. After talking familiarly with the Deity of the universe, he descended to Jerusalem, and, remounting his magic steed, returned to Mecca.

Of course, every reader of the foregoing extravagant tales will immediately brush them aside as preposterous fabrications. And rightly so. To be sure, as actual happenings, they are absolutely false. But let us not fail to note that they are no more so than are all other miracle stories, including those in our own Bible. Belief in miracles has always grown out of the limitations of human knowledge and, just as the boundaries of our knowledge of physical phenomena have been extended, miracles have disappeared. Their happening has now reached the vanishing-point, and none would ever have occurred, had the ancients been as wise as we. The records of these imaginary events have taken their

place among the derelicts floating upon the ancient seas of immature thought and inadequate knowledge.

Did space permit, we might fill pages with the alleged miracles of Æsculapius, Bacchus, Apollonius, Simon Magus and many more. The histories of these personages teem with miracles, as well substantiated and as much believed by their devotees as are any found in our Bible. It will not do to say that our sacred literature is the only true one and that all others are false. So far as miracles are concerned, one is as true as any other. T. W. Doane, an eminent scholar of a half-century ago, said, "All the Christian theologians which the world has yet produced have not been able to procure any evidence of the miracles recorded in the *Gospels* half so strong as can be procured in evidence of miracles performed by heathens and heathen gods, both before and after the time of Jesus."* As an example of one such heathen miracle, he cites the following: "In the early times of the Roman Republic, in the war with the Latins, the gods Castor and Pollux are said to have appeared on white horses in the Roman army, which by their assistance gained a complete victory: in memory of which, the General Posthumius vowed and built a temple to these deities; and for proof of the fact, there was shown, we find, in Cicero's time (106 to 43 B. C.), the marks of the horses' hoofs on a rock at Regillum, where they first

**Bible Myths and Their Parallels in Other Religions*, by T. W. Doane, p. 270.

appeared." I submit that this heathen miracle is just as good, no more so and no less, as any other such product of superstitious imaginations in a world-wide era of lawless signs and wonders.

Among the Greeks it was a common saying, "Miracles for fools," and among the Romans, "The common people like to be deceived—deceived let them be." And so it has been always, from the time of Zoroaster and Buddha and Krishna to Christ and Mahomet and Dowie.

CHAPTER III

MIRACLES OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

The Old Testament of the Hebrew Bible teems with miracles as does the sacred literature of every other early people. Religion and miracle, then and for many centuries after, were almost synonymous. It is unfortunate for those people to-day who believe in the literal inspiration of any sacred literature that those books should have become closed and fossilized long before the modern era of science had shown the utter untenability of their crude imagery of creation and their impossible tales of alleged miraculous events. And we may say this without any detraction from the fundamental spiritual truths of which these ancient myths and legends have become the imperishable vehicles. Those truths, like the axioms of mathematics, will stand in their own right to the end of time. But we must free our minds utterly of the idea that, as literal fact, the myths and legends of the Old Testament are any truer than are those of other sacred writings, the wheat, so to speak, winnowed from the chaff of the false and spurious. They all strike their roots deep into the same subsoil of the crude and childlike thought of primitive peoples.

Probably the supreme miracle of any sacred lit-

erature has to do with the creation of the universe and the origin of life. We are all familiar with the Story of Creation as described in Genesis. As emphasizing the everlasting spiritual truth that this universe, including all life, is the product of the thought and purpose and intelligence of a Supreme Being, this story of a miraculous creation is sublime. As a literal description of the actual process, it is grotesque.

At the very start, let us rid our minds of the idea that any scholar of standing to-day believes that God ever directly revealed any portion of our sacred writings. Had he done so, they would not contain so much that is false. Had he dictated the Story of Creation, he would have made it conform to the manifest law of evolution. We should not now be speculating upon the hidden factors of the process and the mystery of the origin of life. From the formless chaos of the fire-mist to the God-conscious soul of man, all would stand revealed as an open book. The primal secrets of energy and matter and the evolution of stars and solar systems would have been made so plain that the wayfaring man could understand. Men would not have been led astray in their ideas as to the shape and geography of the earth. It would not have been possible for the imaginative theologians of the early church to promulgate for so many centuries a wholly fictitious view of the universe. The world would not have had to wait for the telescope of Galileo to reveal the structure of the heavens. The mad orgy of witchcraft

and the era of demonology in the treatment of disease would not appear as ineffaceable stains upon the records of the legal and medical fraternities. No, the scholarship of to-day recognizes that our Bible is a very human document. Written large from cover to cover are innumerable evidences of the handiwork of man. And yet, we may believe with the utmost confidence that the Hebrew Bible represents the highest expression of the Divine in man to be found in any literature of the world. Just as the fossil record of the rocks reveals to us the story of organic life upon the earth in past ages, so does this Old Book preserve the world's most notable example of spiritual evolution. But that it contains the only record of such evolution we can not believe. Every sacred literature is to a larger or a smaller degree an unfolding of the Divine in the soul of man.

That the miracle Story of Creation and that of the Fall of Man were original with the Hebrew writers, we now know to be untrue. In 1872, George Smith, an English archeologist, in excavating the ancient library of Asshurbanipal, found the first of the Babylonian tablets bearing in cuneiform inscription the Chaldean legends of these events and also that of the Deluge. Soon after, the remaining tablets were found, and they may now be seen in the British Museum in London. The stories told by these tablets are remarkably similar to those of our Old Testament. And they were old long before the legendary date of Abraham's migration from Ur of

the Chaldees. We now know, too, that the Pentateuch, which contains the Hebrew versions of these legends, was not compiled until about 400 B. C. And the very significant fact to observe about this date is that it is after the return of the Hebrew people from their Babylonian captivity. That the rich legacy from the earlier literature and civilization of the valley of the Tigris and the Euphrates had a profound influence in shaping the imaginary accounts of the Old Testament is no longer open to question. That they were a direct revelation from the Almighty of what actually occurred has no more credibility, now, than the belief in Santa Claus.

It is interesting to note, too, that elsewhere in early literatures we find stories of the creation. Few races in their infancy have failed to wonder about the origin of the earth and the sea and the stars and man. The Zend-Avesta, the sacred writings of the ancient Persians, states that Ormuzd, the Supreme Being, created the universe and man in six days, or periods of time.* The order of creation was as follows: First, the heavens; second, the waters; third, the earth; fourth, the trees and plants; fifth, the animals; and sixth, man. After the Creator had completed his work, he rested.

An ancient Etruscan legend of the creation is almost identical with the Persian account.† It represents that God created the universe in six successive periods of a thousand years each. In the sixth

*Von Bohlen: *Introduction to Genesis*, Vol. II, p. 4.
†Dunlap: *Spirit History*, p. 357.

THE CINCINNATI BI
SEMINARY LIBRA
A. No. 13929
D. D. No. 2317
GRADUATE
G.M. ELLIOTT LIBRARY
Cincinnati Bible College & Seminary

man was created and given dominion over the earth and all its creatures.

Passing over the two contradictory accounts of creation found in Genesis, let us first examine the miraculous legend of the Tree of Life and the Serpent. It has many counterparts in ancient literature. One of the records found by George Smith and now in the British Museum represents two figures sitting on either side of a tree, holding out their hands to the fruit, while just back of the woman is sketched a serpent, standing in upright position. Since it is well known that every item in these early sculptures had some significance, it is evident that the Story of the Fall existed in some form among the Babylonians. The ancient Egyptians had a legend of the Tree of Life, the fruit of which made those who ate it become as gods.* Among the legends of the Hindoos we find the tradition of a Tree of Life, the juice of which imparted immortality.† The sacred writings of the Chinese tell of a mysterious garden, in which grew a tree, guarded by a winged serpent and bearing "apples of immortality."‡

There are many variants of this tale. Among the legends of Madagascar is found the story of the Garden of Eden. As given in the *Legends of the Patriarchs,* it runs as follows: "The first man was created of the dust of the earth and was placed in a

Progress of Religious Ideas, Vol. 1, p. 159.
†Bunsen: *Keys of St. Peter,* p. 414.
‡Doane: *Bible Myths and Their Parallels in Other Religions,* p. 14.

garden, where he was subject to none of the ills which now affect mortality; he was also free from all bodily appetites, and though surrounded by delicious fruit and limpid streams yet felt no desire to taste of the fruit or to quaff the water. The Creator had, moreover, strictly forbid him either to eat or to drink. The great enemy, however, came to him, and painted to him in glowing colors the sweetness of the apple and the lusciousness of the date and the succulence of the orange.''* Man ate, and consequently fell.

A representation of the Fall of our first parents was sculptured in the temple of Ipsambul, in Nubia. The traveler (Wilson) who reports this states that ''a very exact representation of Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden is to be seen in that cave, and that the serpent climbing round the tree is especially delineated, and the whole subject of the tempting of our first parents most accurately exhibited.''†

Colonel Tod's *History of Rajapoutana* tells of the discovery of ''a sculptured column in a cave-temple in the South of India, representing the first pair at the foot of the ambrosial tree, and a serpent entwined among the heavily laden boughs, presenting to them some of the fruit from his mouth.''‡

The French writer, Montfaucon, in his work *Antiquity Explained,* gives a reproduction of an an-

---

Legends of the Patriarchs, p. 31.

†Quoted by Higgins: *Anacalypsis*, Vol. I, p. 403.

‡Tod: *History of Rajapoutana*, p. 581, quoted by Higgins; *Anacalypsis*, Vol. I, p. 404.

cient Pagan sculpture showing the Tree of Life, the first pair, the serpent and the forbidden fruit.*

The literature of the early Mexicans represents the first woman as always accompanied by a serpent, who seems to be talking with her.†

In the *Elysium* of the *Islands of the Blessed,* the Greeks pictured the beautiful Garden of the Hesperides, in which grew a tree bearing golden apples of immortality.‡ This garden was guarded by three nympths and a serpent, the latter being represented in ancient medallions as twined about the tree of life. It was one of the labors of Hercules to gather some of these apples of life.

The Persians imagined an original abode of men, a beautiful land of perfect bliss, traversed by a mighty river and containing a forbidden tree with its serpent tempter.**

In their legend of the creation, the East African negroes have a story of the Fall strikingly similar to the Biblical account.††

And so we might continue, for this miracle of the speaking serpent and the imaginary existence of a tree whose fruit confers knowledge or immortality is common to many ancient cults. It is not peculiar to the Hebrew Bible. It was borrowed from Chaldean myths and legends, which were old long before the Hebrew people had arrived at the threshold of

L'Antiquité Expliquée, Vol. I.
†Squire: *Serpent Symbol,* p. 161.
‡Montfaucon: *L'Antiquité Expliquée,* Vol. I, p. 211.
**Commentaries on the Old Testament,* Vol. I, p. 70.
††Goldziher: *Hebrew Mythology,* p. 87.

civilization. It attempted to answer those ages-old questions as to why man is born to toil and sorrow and why he dies. Israel borrowed its solutions to these problems from the literature of its older and more civilized neighbor, Babylon. That they were wholly imaginative counted for naught in those primitive times of uncritical thought and superstitious ignorance. Nothing better was at hand, and so the Hebrew writers accepted these poetic myths and made them a part of their sacred literature. But that they in any sense were a direct revelation from the Almighty no longer has any credibility, except among those who like to be deceived.

John Fiske said: "The story of the Serpent in Eden is an Aryan story in every particular. The notion of Satan as the author of evil appears only in the later books, composed after the Jews had come into close contact with Persian ideas."* John W. Draper made this comment: "In the old legends of dualism, the evil spirit was said to have sent a serpent to ruin Paradise. These legends became known to the Jews during their Babylonian captivity."†

True to the age in which it was written, the Bible opens with miracle but, thanks to the archeologist and the modern scholar, its origin has been traced to Pagan sources.

**Myths and Myth-Makers*, p. 112.
†*Religion and Science*, p. 62.

THE DELUGE

The Deluge in itself, of course, was not a miracle, but associated with it, as told in the Hebrew Bible, are miraculous elements. That some such catastrophe engulfed certain portions of the earth in early times there can be little doubt, for many people of antiquity have traditions of a great flood which destroyed the whole human race, except their own ancestors. There is little, if any, ground for believing, however, that the Hebrew people themselves shared in this affliction. At least, it is now certain that they borrowed their account of it from the same source as that of the Story of Creation, namely the Chaldean legends, with which they became acquainted during their Babylonian captivity.

The similarities between the Chaldean and Hebrew accounts of the Deluge are so striking as to leave no doubt regarding the source of the latter. In several instances the language is practically identical. In both cases, the Lord is directly instrumental in saving one chosen family. In the worked-over Hebrew account, he is represented as miraculously shutting them in after they had entered the ark. Then the Lord opened the mythical "windows of heaven." "And the flood was forty days upon the earth. . . . And the waters prevailed exceedingly upon the earth; and all the hills, that were under the whole heaven, were covered. Fifteen cubits upward did the waters prevail; and the mountains were covered. And all flesh died that moved upon the earth, both of fowl, and of cattle, and of

beast, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth, and every man . . . and Noah only remained alive, and they that were with him in the ark.''*

When the fictitious Noah and his family had emerged from the ark on the seventeenth day of the seventh month from the beginning of the catastrophe, he ''builded an altar unto the Lord; . . . and offered burnt offerings on the altar. And the Lord smelled a sweet savour; and the Lord said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake.''† This anthropomorphic representation of God was, of course, on a par with the crude sense-thinking of those primitive times. The impossibility of any one's miraculously knowing what God thought in the sanctuary of Heaven did not occur to those simple-minded weavers of pious fiction.

It is interesting to note that while the Hindoos, the Persians, the Greeks, the Chinese, the Mexicans, the ancient Scandinavians and other early peoples preserve in their literatures the legend of the Deluge, the Egyptians, the oldest race of antiquity, have no record of such a catastrophe. At the very time that the whole earth, according to the Hebrew chronicle, was submerged with a universal deluge, the Pharaoh Khoufou-Cheops was building his pyramid. Several other nations of antiquity seem to be destitute of such a legend.‡

Genesis VII:17-23.
†*Genesis* VIII:20-21.
‡Doane: *Bible Myths and Their Parallels in Other Religions*, Ch. II.

The miraculous appearance of the "first" rainbow as a sign from God that he would not again devastate the earth in this manner is common to a number of these legends. When Roger Bacon many centuries later attempted to give the first scientific explanation of this as well as of other natural phenomena, he was imprisoned, through the influence of the church, for fourteen years.

The attempt of the imaginative theologians of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries to account for the occurrence of fossils by referring their origin to the Deluge of Noah is a ludicrous incident in quite recent times associated with this ancient legend. The idea, too, that these fossils were the imperfect specimens of God's handiwork in his first attempts at fashioning the life of the earth is an amusing reminiscence of those centuries of Fundamentalist rigor and vigor, as well as an illustration of the tremendous grip which these old stories from the cradles of the race have had upon the minds of men, even down to the present time.

That such utterly erroneous and distorted notions of the facts of Nature can still be current in modern times is an impressive evidence of the immaturity of the human intellect.

THE TOWER OF BABEL

From the common folk-lore of mankind, we see emerging in numerous places the fable of the "Confusion of Tongues." Were this story to be found in a book of fairy tales or in the purely mythi-

cal traditions of any ancient people, and not in the Bible, it would unhesitatingly be judged, even by orthodox folk, at its true value. It is surely more than "passing strange" what people will believe, if it appears to have emanated from a sacred source. Just consider for a moment the following language:

"And the Lord said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do. Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech. So the Lord scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth: and they left off to build the city."*

Are we to assume that the God of the universe can be jealous of the attainments of the pigmies of his own creation? Is any one living so naive as to suppose that what God thought or said or did in the councils of heaven was ever known to any man? The very language of this, and of all similar passages of the Old Testament, betrays its purely mythical origin.

Berosus, the ancient historian of Chaldea, has related this fable substantially as follows: "The first inhabitants of the earth, glorying in their strength and size, and despising the gods, undertook to raise a tower whose top should reach the sky, in the place where Babylon now stands. But when it approached the heavens, the winds assisted the gods

Genesis XI:6-8.

and overthrew the work of the contrivers, and also introduced a diversity of tongues among men, who till that time had all spoken the same language.'"*

Josephus, the Jewish historian, in his *Jewish Antiquities*,† says it was a very wicked man named Nimrod who conceived the idea of building a tower to heaven and that his purpose was to prevent the Lord from again drowning the world. The ruins of a certain tower in Babylon are even pointed out to this day as the remains of this mythical piece of architecture.

The Armenians have a tradition of the "Confusion of Tongues." So do the Hindoos. Traces of such a legend are to be found among the peoples of India, Africa and Australia. The ancient Mexicans preserved a well-defined story of such a tower, and they even pointed to the ruins at Cholula as evidence of its truth.‡

Yes, wonderful borrowers from contemporary and earlier literatures were these Hebrew compilers of ancient myths and legends. True, as in the case of the Story of Creation, they took the old grotesque legends of the Chaldeans, transfigured them with the genius of Hebrew thought and passed them on to all succeeding centuries as an imperishable monument to the fundamental spiritual truth of the universe—that back of it all must be the thought and purpose and intelligence of an Infinite Being. But

*Baring-Gould: *Legends of the Patriarchs*, p. 147.
†*Jewish Antiquities*, Bk. I, Ch. IV, p. 80.
‡Doane: *Bible Myths and Their Parallels in Other Religions*, Ch. III.

that this and other miracle legends of the Bible were original with the Hebrews has been shown by the excavations of archeologists and the disclosures of Christian scholarship to have no foundation in fact.

MIRACLE FAITH AN OBSTACLE TO TRUTH

The Christian who to-day still persists in a literal acceptance of these incredible tales, as divine revelations from on High, unwittingly bases his faith upon the creations of pagan literature. The Old Testament, far from preserving the voice of God to a chosen people, simply records the literary, moral and spiritual evolution of a race which made more progress in the direction of a higher life than any other people of antiquity. These compilers of the stories of the legendary origin of their race and the chroniclers of the nation's historical development never had the slightest idea, at the time, that they were writing a Bible. Indeed, they would have ridiculed such a notion. To be sure, these men often talked as though they, or those of whom they wrote, had been on intimate terms with God. But these were wholly figurative expressions. We must agree with the author of St. John's Gospel that "No man hath at any time seen God."

Much of the literature since Bible times may just as truly be regarded as inspired as anything found in the Old and New Testaments. Such a statement, of course, seems startling, but there is no question of its truth. Inspiration simply means that an individual is called upon or is urged onward by some

unseen power to do or say or write a particular thing. One may call this unseen power God, but, whatever the name, it can be no less than that "power not ourselves that makes for righteousness." When one feels, as did the prophets of Israel, an all-powerful inward persuasion to bear a message to his fellowmen or to perform some outstanding service for their advancement, he may regard himself as inspired. If inspiration was ever a fact in the history of the race, it is no less so in modern times than it was in the ages of ignorance and superstition. If ever men were inspired, such outstanding leaders as Savonarola, Roger Bacon, Galileo, Sir Isaac Newton, Shakespeare, Tennyson, Pasteur, Darwin, Abraham Lincoln and many more were instruments in the hands of an influence above and beyond themselves that makes for better things.

In many respects, it is everlastingly true that the Bible has been one of the greatest obstacles to progress that the world has ever encountered. When any book comes to be regarded as a divinely authorized revelation of eternal truth upon all matters to which it pertains, then growth ceases. Had it not been for the false assumption that the miracle legends of the Old Testament form an inspired text-book of science, the present spectacle of a fossilized Fundamentalist view of the universe would have been impossible. One has only to review the record from Galileo and Newton to Lamarck and Darwin to understand what a traditionary foe the false interpretation of the Bible has been to scien-

tific progress. Entrenched ignorance, buttressed by a wealth of Scriptural texts borrowed from the miracle stories of pagan literature, opposed the new geography of the earth made known through the discoveries of Columbus and Magellan, stood like a wall against the acceptance of the revelations of Galileo's telescope and Newton's law of gravitation, sought to substitute a belief in witches and evil spirits for the researches of modern medicine and surgery, invented the crudest sort of theories to account for the existence of fossils, attempted to explain the findings of modern astronomy by reference to the fables of antiquity, and for three-quarters of a century has fought the over-shadowing truth of evolution. The text "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live"* has resulted in the shedding of more innocent blood than any other single cause in history.

If theologians could only be persuaded to accept the Bible for what it really is—an evolution of the ethical and spiritual ideals of a highly religious people—and not as a divinely inspired and infallible revelation of all truth, its practical utility to a world which finds itself groping somewhat blindly in search of a larger spiritual life would be immeasurably enhanced. It is time that people came to know the truth about the Bible. No other book has had so great an influence upon the development of men and nations. It has woven itself into the very fabric of civilization. In art and literature, in government and politics, in morals and religion, in the whole so-

Exodus 22:18.

cial structure, it has been a factor of vast import. But it must not be inferred that this influence has always been for the best. In many instances, it certainly has not been. The belief in miracles with all the false knowledge that it has entailed is an outstanding example. If miracle faith could be utterly wiped out, and in its place substituted the truths of science and a genuine eagerness everywhere to add to them, superstition and entrenched ignorance would "fold their tents like the Arabs and as silently steal away."

Belief in miracles has only fostered a confusion of thought in comparison with which the imaginary miracle of the "Confusion of Tongues" at the mythical Tower of Babel would have been a trivial circumstance.

MIRACLES OF MOSES AND THE EXODUS

In the miracles of Moses and the Exodus and in those of the succeeding period of the Judges, we have a capital example of the fact that miracles flourish chiefly in those periods of which we have no first-hand documents. It is only in historical fiction that we find miracles recorded. Only when there has been no possibility either of proving or of disproving the truth of these alleged events do we find these lovers of the fabulous weaving them into their narratives. And then to crown it all, these pious fiction writers sought to obtain the stamp of divine authority by attributing their inventions to the direct intervention of the Lord in the lives and

works of men. Most wonderful of all, they have succeeded for two thousand years and more in convincing the unthinking majority that these miraculous tales are actual history. As a matter of fact, they no more represent history than do Æsop's Fables and, as for inspiration, they stand on the same footing with all other myths and legends of antiquity.

But let us look at some of the reputed miracles of this legendary period of Hebrew history. In Exodus, seventh chapter, eighth to tenth verses, we read: "And the Lord spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying, When Pharaoh shall speak to you, saying, Shew a miracle for you: then thou shalt say unto Aaron, Take thy rod, and cast it before Pharaoh, and it shall become a serpent. And Moses and Aaron went in unto Pharaoh, and they did so as the Lord had commanded: and Aaron cast down his rod before Pharaoh, and before his servants, and it became a serpent."

In the first place, let us note that this passage begins with the utterly false assumption that God ever spoke thus directly with mortal man. That in itself should relegate this whole narrative to the realm of pious fiction. Furthermore, Orpheus, said to be the earliest poet of Greece, attributed to the Greek god, Bacchus, a magic rod with which he performed miracles and which he could at will change into a serpent.* This myth was current in the East

*Bell: *Panthenon of the Gods and Heroes of Antiquity,* Vol. I, p. 122; Taylor: *Diegesis,* pp. 190-91.

long before the compiling of the Pentateuch. Bacchus, too, had two mothers, one by nature and one by adoption; he, too, crossed the Red Sea, dry shod, at the head of his hosts; he smote a rock in the desert, and water flowed forth; wherever he went, in response to his magic rod, the land flowed with milk and honey; he and his army enjoyed the light of the sun at night, even as Moses was led by a pillar of fire; Bacchus was represented as having horns, and so was Moses; Bacchus "was picked up in a box floating on the water" just as Moses was discovered in an "ark of bulrushes"; the burning bush in which the Lord is represented as speaking to Moses is common to both legends; Bacchus, too, was called the "Lawgiver," and he received laws written on two tablets of stone.

Such similarities as these are more than coincidences. And inasmuch as the Greek myth antedates by far the Hebrew version, there can be no doubt as to its falsity, so far as the Bible is concerned. An orthodox Christian believes that all other forms of these old legends were copied from the Hebrew. Scholars, however, have shown that such is not the case. No other people of antiquity were more prolific borrowers from contemporary and earlier literatures than were the Hebrews. But, even granting that this were not so, why should the Hebrew version be credited and all others denounced as false? The idea that God chose the Hebrew people as his only means of revelation is a view so childlike and absurd that its mere statement

would seem to refute itself in the minds of all intelligent people. Just as in man's evolution from the brute, there is not one "missing link" only, but many, so, if God did ever exercise any choice, there have been many chosen peoples rather than one. That false notion has been a stumbling-block all too long.

As to the story of Moses and the ark of bulrushes, this myth is to be found in numerous places in the literature of antiquity. The oldest such tale is probably that related of King Sargon of Babylon, who lived a thousand years before Moses was born. It is told thus: "Sargon, the powerful King, the King of Agade am I. My mother was poor, my father I knew not; the brother of my father lived in the mountains. . . . My mother, who was poor, conceived me, and secretly gave birth to me; she placed me in a basket of reeds, she shut up the mouth of it with bitumen, she abandoned me to the river, which did overwhelm me. The river bore me away, and brought me to Akki the Irrigator. Akki the Irrigator received me in the goodness of his heart. Akki the Irrigator reared me to boyhood. Akki the Irrigator made me a gardner. My service as a gardner was pleasing unto Istar, and I became King."*

Other versions of this story are to be found regarding "various other important personages of antiquity." This, of course, is not in itself a miracle, but its earlier appearance in other literatures throws

*Quoted in Johnson's *Legends of Israel*, pp. 107-108.

light upon the source of much of the miraculous in this same portion of the Hebrew Bible.

J. M. Robertson, in his *Christianity and Mythology,* traces the myth about the reception of the Commandments of the Law on Mount Sinai back to the early Ægean period of Greek history.* A Babylonian tablet,† found by French excavators in 1901 and dating back to about 2150 B. C., gives a very striking parallel to portions of the Israelitish law. That the Hebrews became familiar with these earlier laws during their captivity and later wrote them into their own system of jurisprudence, there can be little doubt. That any portion of the Hebrew law was miraculously revealed, no longer has any credence.

Let us turn to those miracles of magic with which Moses and Aaron smote the land of Egypt. That there were ten of them is in itself significant, for ten was a mystic number among the peoples of the ancient East. There were ten Hebrew patriarchs before the Flood, there were ten early dynasties of the Egyptian gods, ten antediluvian kings of Chaldea, ten ages of the Etruscans, ten spheres of the Pythagoreans, ten early kings of the sacred Persian traditions, ten fathers of Hindoo sacred tradition, ten celestial spheres, ten commandments, and the usage of tithes, besides many other instances.

These miraculous plagues, too, have been shown to be in large measure simply exaggerations of natural happenings which occur every year. For

Christianity and Mythology, p. 100.
†Smyth: *The Bible in the Making,* p. 79.

example, the changing of the water of the Nile into blood doubtless has no other nucleus of truth than that "about the middle of July, in eight or ten days the river turns grayish blue to dark red, occasionally of so intense a color as to look like newly shed blood."*

Just consider for a moment the crude conception, in this twentieth century of enlightenment, of a God who should call forth through the instrumentality of two chosen magicians a plague of frogs upon an offending land, only to be followed shortly after by similar divinely sent plagues of lice and flies. Were not these wholly fictitious tales associated with a sacred literature which became fossilized centuries ago and which has been clothed with the sanctity and authority arising from the mere lapse of time, no one to-day would give them credence. That men still do is proof in abundance that the large majority of humankind do very little real thinking. If it comes as a shock to know that large portions of this Old Book are simply the imaginative products of highly spiritual souls, inspired with racial pride and deeply interested in the glory and prestige of their people, then we must be shocked, for such is the undoubted fact. When the intellectuals of the world in large numbers are denying the existence of any God at all and when, in any case, the conception of him has been completely revolutionized by the conquests of knowledge and the advances of critical thought, it

*Quoted by White in *A History of the Warfare of Science with Theology*, Vol. II, p. 375.

becomes sheer religious suicide for a group of so-called Fundamentalists to attempt to rivet this antiquated idea of a tribal deity upon the church. Let us clear the cobwebs from our brains and cast upon the scrap-heap of antiquity this legacy of rubbish from a superstitious past. Such faith is not religion. Let us appraise it for what it is worth—the stagnation of thought and the enthronement of ignorance. Do not mistake the point of view, however. We would not blot from memory these tales from the unwritten past. We would simply cease to regard them as having any real basis in historic fact. Only thus can the church hope to retain its hold upon that increasing number of men and women who think. The coming generation, which is receiving its education along modern lines, can no longer be taught the science and theology of medievalism. Persistence in this determination will irretrievably lose these young people to the church and its future.

Were these miracles true and the incidents associated with them, just consider what a picture they paint of God! Moses and Aaron are told "according to the commandments of the Lord" deliberately to falsify. They are told to request of Pharaoh a "three days journey in the wilderness, that we may sacrifice to the Lord our God," when the real purpose is to leave the land of Egypt forever. They are told to rob from their masters and "spoil the Egyptians." God is represented, not only as bringing the succession of plagues upon Egypt, but also as "hardening the heart" of Pharaoh so that each time, through the

deliberate act of God, he is made to break his promise to Moses. And we are asked to believe that the God of the universe was once such a Being!

That the children of Israel were once in bondage in Egypt there is little doubt. That their departure, however, was in the miraculous manner described by the sacred historian we can not believe. In a number of places in ancient literature, it is asserted that these brick-making slaves of Egypt became afflicted with a loathsome pestilence and were driven out of the land of the Nile by their masters. In a wild and barren desert, they were abandoned. In their distress, they turned to Moses, probably the most able man among them, for leadership, and after tedious wanderings in the wilderness came to the land of Palestine.*

However the passage of the Red Sea may have been effected, it is impossible to believe that it was in the miraculous manner recorded in the Bible. Andrew D. White has said, "Modern researches have also shown that some of the most important features of the legends can not possibly be reconciled with the records of the monuments (Egyptian); for example, that the Pharaoh of the Exodus was certainly not overwhelmed in the Red Sea."† It is entirely probable that the Israelites crossed at the northern end of the Red Sea at the time of low tide, and the memory of this passage was grossly exaggerated into a mighty miracle.

---

*Pritchard: *Historical Records*, pp. 74-75; Dunlap; *Spirit History*, p. 40; Cory: *Ancient Fragments*, pp. 80-81.

†White: *A History of the Warfare of Science with Theology*, Vol. II, p. 375.

The pillar of cloud by day and of fire by night probably refers to nothing more than the time-honored custom among Arabian and Persian caravans in crossing a wilderness "to carry at the head of the march braziers of burning wood raised on poles." These serve to indicate the route so that those in the rear may know where to follow. But in handing down this tradition by word of mouth from generation to generation and from century to century before it was committed to written form, the nucleus of truth became magnified and distorted into a direct manifestation of guidance by the Almighty.

Whatever the miraculous bursting forth of water may have been, it was probably nothing more mysterious than the fortunate circumstance of finding a spring. But inasmuch as Bacchus was currently reported, under similar circumstances, to have drawn water by smiting a rock, it was thought only fair by the Hebrews to ascribe the same marvelous power to their leader.

The manna in the wilderness was doubtless nothing more than the gum-like substance which, even to this day, exudes from certain species of desert trees and falls in flakes to the ground. That this could have been sufficient in quantity, however, to supply the food of a whole tribe is exceedingly improbable.

In so far as this series of wonder stories has any basis of fact whatever, in each instance the slender thread of truth is without doubt some perfectly

simple, natural occurrence, which the myth-making faculty of the age wove into the form of a miracle. The dividing of the waters for a safe passage was not an unusual occurrence in the minds of ancient writers. The literatures of Egypt, Hindustan and India record a number of such events. Josephus states that the Pamphylian Sea divided to let Alexander the Great and his army pass.

It is believed that the real history of the Hebrews began with the Exodus and all that precedes is pure myth and legend. And yet there are to-day misguided leaders with minds so steeped in these ancient view-points that they would pin the progress of twentieth century science to a literal belief in the crude mythology of that unhistorical antiquity.

OTHER MIRACLES OF ISRAEL

The receiving of the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai, written with "the finger of God" on tables of stone, has its counterpart in numerous places in the literature of antiquity.* Reference has already been made to the parallel with the similar miraculous revelation of divine law to the Greek god Bacchus. While Zoroaster, too, was praying on a high mountain in the midst of thunders and lightnings, the Lord appeared unto him and delivered in person the "Book of the Law." It is more than likely that the compilers of the Pentateuch were familiar with this Persian legend, but, even though

*Doane: *Bible Myths and Their Parallels in Other Religions*, Ch. VII.

they were not, why is the Hebrew tale any more to be believed than is that of ancient Iran?

Minos, the lawgiver of the Cretans, ascended a mountain and there received from the Supreme God the sacred laws, which he brought back with him. The Egyptian deity, Thoth, was believed to have directly revealed the law unto his people, writing portions of the commandments with his very finger. Lycurgus, the Spartan lawgiver, obtained his laws from Apollo himself. The ancient Mexicans had a similar tradition. In more recent times, Mohammed received every page of the Koran from the hand of the angel Gabriel. Almost all nations of antiquity preserved legends telling how their holy men ascended into high places to commune directly with God and to receive from him laws for the guidance of the people. In thus appropriating this legend from folk-lore of the race, the Hebrews were only following the custom of their age. That they succeeded in convincing subsequent peoples, even down to the present day, of the literal truth of this mythical event is one of the most astonishing miracles of all time.

The marvelous exploits of that old pugilist Samson are simply the fables of the Greek hero Hercules in Hebrew garb. It is needless here to enter into a detailed comparison of the two sets of miraculous feats. This legend of Hercules is vastly older than the origin of the Hebrew version. The ancient Egyptians had their Hercules and, according to Herodotus,* he was known centuries even before

*Tacitus: *Annals*, Book II, Ch. LIX.

the Grecian hero of that name, and the latter antedated by far the time of Samson. Other nations of antiquity had a similar legend. Among them were the Babylonians.

That any in enlightened America to-day should give credence to these extravagant tales is additional proof of Barnum's famous assertion that the American people like to be humbugged. Were they really true, what a monstrous Being they would make of the God of the universe, who became Samson's partner in these prodigious acts of prowess!

The miraculous story of Jonah and the Whale, too, has its counterpart in the labors of Hercules.* The famous Greek leaped overboard at the very same place, Joppa, and he also remained three days and three nights in the sea monster's society. The Hindoos have a similar fable. Tales of Ancient Greece tell the story of "Arion the Musician" who was thrown overboard, but landed on the back of a huge fish, who carried him safely to shore. It has been urged by many critics that the miracle recorded of Jonah is to be regarded "only as an allegory, founded on the Phœnician myth of Hercules rescuing Hesione from the sea monster by leaping himself into its jaws, and for three days and three nights continuing to tear its entrails." It has been suggested that the purpose of the tale was to typify the wilful disobedience of the Israelites to Jehovah's commands, their captivity and subsequent release.

*Tylor: *Primitive Culture*, Vol. I, p. 306.

The story of Joshua's command to the sun and moon to stand still is also told of the Greek god Bacchus.* He, too, arrested the course of these heavenly luminaries. An Indian legend† relates that after the death of Krishna the sun stood still at the command of Arjouan. At the command of Mâtanga,‡ a famous Buddhist, the sun was prevented from rising. To stop the sun in his course at will was a common thing among the disciples of Buddha. The Chinese** have a similar legend, and it is also related that one of the holy men among the ancient Mexicans†† likewise commanded the sun to stand still, and he obeyed.

The questions naturally arise, "If the Hebrew legend is true, why are not the others also? If any are false, why are they not all false?" That is the fundamental error of orthodox Christian thinking. People denounce all such stories as false, except those found in our Bible, apparently entirely ignorant of the fact that all had their origin in the common folk-lore of mankind.

The speaking of Balaam's ass is simply part and parcel of those ancient fables in which animals are endowed with the power of speech. This was believed to be a common occurrence throughout the East in those far-off times. Such incidents are

*Higgins: *Anacalypsis*, Vol. II, p. 19.
†*Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 191, and Vol. II, p. 241.
‡Hardy: *Buddhist Legends*, pp. 50, 53 and 140.
**Higgins: *Anacalypsis*, Vol. II, p. 191.
††*Ibid.*, p. 39.

found in Egyptian and Chaldean legends.* Homer† stated that the horse of Achilles spoke to him.

The falling of the walls of Jericho is probably only a figurative way of expressing an easy victory over a frightened enemy. A story entitled *The Charge of the Mule Brigade* is told of our own Civil War. A troop of mules one night broke loose from the Union lines and, rushing pell-mell through the outposts of the Confederate position, spread such dismay among the enemy through the upsetting of stacks of arms and the general din and commotion created, that, believing a surprise attack to be under way, a general retreat ensued. Had anything similar to this occurred in Bible times, it would most certainly have been magnified into a mighty miracle and belief in the direct manifestation of the hand of Providence in behalf of his chosen people.

Of all the figures of ancient Israel, some of the most marvelous miracle stories cluster about those first representatives of the prophetic line, Elijah and Elisha. Every Sunday-school child is familiar with these wonder stories, for, despite the fact that their wholly fictitious character has been well known for many years, the church continues to teach them as literal and inspired truth. We teach, too, in the public schools the myths of ancient Greece and Rome, but with this important difference—we do not teach them as true. They are given for just exactly what they are—pure fiction. And that is

*Smith: *Chaldean Account of Genesis*, p. 138.
†*Progress of Religious Ideas*, Vol. I, p. 323.

what should be done with regard to all Bible miracles. Only when the church comes to deal honestly and fairly and truthfully with the whole range of Bible literature, appraising it as all other world literature is appraised, will she regain, if it is still possible to do so, her hold upon the present and succeeding generations. She must cease to sponsor the manifest falsehood involved in teaching as divinely true that which had its origin in an atmosphere of pious self-delusion. If the Christian clergy are ignorant, as many of them are, of the origin of the Bible, then they must be educated. The right to preach regarding the most fundamental issues of life and death must not be indiscriminately granted to every individual who feels himself called of God. But worse still, to make belief in this legacy of fiction essential to entry into the Christian ministry is a blunder on the part of the church so gross as well to challenge her right and competency to leadership.

But let us return to Elijah and Elisha. Associated with the career of Elijah, we are familiar with such marvelous happenings as the raising of the widow's son, the never-failing cruse of oil, the feeding of the prophet by the ravens, the fire sent by the Lord to consume the sacrifice on Mount Carmel, the smiting of the Jordan with the prophet's cloak and the parting of the waters, the destruction of the two companies of soldiers by fire from Heaven, and the prophet's ascension in a chariot of fire. Elisha is distinguished for similar miracles. He, too, parted

the Jordan. Not only did he raise the Shunamite's son, but he also cured Naaman of leprosy. Because children were rude to him, he cursed them in the name of the Lord, and two she bears were promptly sent, who tore in pieces forty-two fun-loving lads. In the matter of the widow's oil, he did even better than Elijah had done, for he multiplied the quantity all at once in an astonishing way. At his request the Lord afflicted a whole Syrian army with blindness. An axhead which had sunk to the bottom of the Jordan obligingly swam to the surface at the instigation of the prophet. Probably the most remarkable achievement, however, came years after the prophet's death, when a dead man was raised to life by being brought accidentally into contact with his bones.

Other prophets of antiquity, particularly Zoroaster, Buddha and Krishna, had healed the sick and raised the dead. The parting of the waters for the passage of distinguished personages was a common occurrence. Those who would not accept the message of Zoroaster suffered dire afflictions. In the Hindoo scriptures we read that Maneka filled his granary by means of miraculous showers of grain. His wife possessed a never-failing "pot of curry." His son, too, had a bag of money which never needed replenishing. The calling down of fire from heaven to consume Elijah's offering probably refers to nothing else than a bolt of lightning which set fire to his altar, if indeed there is any nucleus of truth in the story whatever. The sacred writings of the

Hindoos are full of stories of Holy Ones who, like Elijah, were translated to heaven without death. Xisuthrus* of Babylonian mythology thus ascended to heaven. The Chinese preserve similar legends.

It is interesting to note that these two prophets left no first-hand documents of their lives and work. These miraculous stories are utterly beyond the reach of confirmation. They were invented long after the events described, by imaginative Hebrew writers who wished to throw a halo of glory about the heroic period of the nation's history. In the period of David, where we should logically expect to find it, there is a most notable absence of miracle. The chroniclers of those events were contemporary witnesses. And even in that far-away time of easy credulity and the imaginary interpretation of the most ordinary happenings, men were prone to write down the truth when they were sure of what it was.

As a notable illustration of the unhistorical character of many portions of the Old Testament, we may cite the book of Daniel, in which the miraculous element plays a large part. As quoted by Andrew D. White in his classic *History of the Warfare of Science with Theology in Christendom,* Professor Sayce, the most eminent Assyriologist and Egyptologist of Great Britain a generation ago, asserted that ". . . . .the book of Daniel contains serious mistakes; that the so-called historical chapters of that book so conflict with the monuments that the author can not have been a contemporary of

*Smith: *Chaldean Account of Genesis.*

Nebuchadnezzar and Cyrus; that 'the story of Belshazzar's fall is not historical'; that the Belshazzar referred to in it as king and as the son of Nebuchadnezzar, was not the son of Nebuchadnezzar, and was never king; that 'King Darius the Mede,' who plays so great a part in the story, never existed; that the book associates persons and events really many years apart, and that it must have been written at a period far later than the time assigned in it for its own origin.'"*

And yet we are not justified in condemning this book as a pure fabrication with no useful end in view. It was written at a particularly trying period of the national history and is thought to be in the nature of a parable whose purpose it was to hearten the Hebrew people and give them courage to bear their heavy burdens and to face the future with hope and confidence.

White also says, "As to the book of Ezra, he (Professor Sayce) tells us that we are confronted by a chronological inconsistency which no amount of ingenuity can explain away. He also acknowledges that the book of Esther 'contains many exaggerations and improbabilities, and is simply founded upon one of those same historical tales of which the Persian chronicles seem to have been full.' "†

In commenting upon the contribution of ancient

*A *History of the Warfare of Science with Theology,* Vol. II, p. 373.

†*Ibid.,* Vol. II, p. 373.

Egypt to the sacred literature of the Hebrew people, White says ". . . they (Egyptologists) have published plans of Egyptian temples and copies of the sculptures upon their walls, revealing the earlier origin of some of the most striking features of the worship and ceremonial claimed to have been revealed especially to the Hebrews; they have found in the *Egyptian Book of the Dead*, and in various inscriptions of the Nile temples and tombs, earlier sources of much in the ethics so long claimed to have been revealed only to the chosen people in the Book of the Covenant, in the ten commandments, and elsewhere; they have given to the world copies of the Egyptian texts showing that the theology of the Nile was one of various fruitful sources of later ideas, statements and practises regarding the brazen serpent, the golden calf, trinities, miraculous conceptions, incarnations, resurrections, ascensions and the like, and that Egyptian sacro-scientific ideas contributed to early Jewish and Christian sacred literature statements, beliefs, and even phrases regarding the Creation, astronomy, geography, magic, medicine, diabolical influences, with a multitude of other ideas, which we also find coming into early Judaism in greater or less degree from Chaldean and Persian sources."*

What above all else the present generation needs to receive in its religious instruction is the outstanding fact that this Old Book is in no sense a divine revelation of infallible utterances. Probably

Ibid., Vol. II, p. 375-376.

no more human document was ever produced than the Old Testament. Literal truth and accuracy are no more to be found in it than they are in any other ancient writings. To accept its contents as infallibly true and the essence of all wisdom is to dam up the springs of eternal truth and to court intellectual, moral and spiritual stagnation. When the sunlight of scientific investigation has utterly swept away all belief in the present occurrence of miraculous events, why should men continue the pretense that such events ever have occurred? The answer is that such people simply do not think. They have never analyzed the thing and reduced it to the simple terms of absurdity. And then, too, this false idea of a divinely revealed book is responsible for a deal of ignorant misconception. If people could really know how this Old Book grew, just as any other literature has grown, the religious status of civilization would be set ahead to an incalculable degree. If they could free their minds completely of belief in the slightest degree of any miraculous element in it, the ground would be cleared for a real spiritual renaissance of mankind. And when I say "they," I mean chiefly the religious leaders of the church, for it is these men and women who hold the unthinking in spiritual bondage to a fictitious faith. The educated classes and thoughtful people everywhere, particularly the rising generation, which is becoming acquainted with scientific view-points and with the modern spirit of intelligent inquiry, are breaking away from this faith in vast numbers. Re-

ligion, of course, will never perish from the earth but, if the church is to remain its vehicle of expression, it will be compelled to abandon its teaching of the miraculous and to square its doctrines with the facts as they are. Not much longer will people acquiesce in the pulling of the wool over their eyes by a clergy which, either actually or wilfully, is ignorant both of history and of the progress of science.

As to the real value of the Bible, thus shorn of its miraculous elements, let me quote from my *Through Science to God*: "And if you ask, 'What does this modern view leave to us of the Bible?' the answer is 'Everything of any permanent value.' The deeps of the human spirit are the same yesterday, to-day and forever. The Bible is the world's classic record of religious experience. It unfolds the most notable example of spiritual evolution. Old ideas of God and sin and justice and worship, adapted only to the childhood of the race, are gradually outgrown. We see them replaced by new and loftier conceptions. In this Book of Books, we feel the religious life of a great people throb with the energy of constantly enlarging religious convictions. Religion is no dead static thing. It grows brighter and brighter with each fresh revelation of the Divine Immanence. The crude notions growing out of the literal interpretation of ideas belonging to another age are slipping into the background. But the lasting experiences of men—their loves and hates, griefs and struggles, defeats and victories,

hopes and fears, temptations and desires—are still in the Bible. The stories of these experiences are as applicable to-day as they were three thousand years ago. And these, the teachings of science can never touch. The spiritual appeal of the Bible is as strong as ever. And this appeal is absolutely independent of any adherence to the outgrown symbols of a bygone era of world affairs. A knowledge of science has relieved religious teaching of much excess baggage, and has given it immeasurably nobler conceptions of God and the universe, but the fundamental spiritual values of the race, implanted in the evolving soul of man and finding expression in the sacred literature of the Bible, will stand eternally in their own right. They are indestructible as the law of gravitation or the primal energy from which our solar system sprang. This crystallization in the Bible of these heights and deeps of human experience can never be taken away. With such a priceless legacy, the church may well relinquish its formal adherence to the outgrown symbols of the transcendent conception of the spirituality of the universe.''*

In the foregoing, I make use of the expression "revelation of the Divine Immanence." By that I mean, as applied to man, the unfolding of the divine in him in the natural process of his evolutionary development, and not a definite and concrete revelation of God in any specific act. Concretely revealed truth or direct intervention in the orderly proce-

*Through Science to God, pp. 213-214.

dure of this universe, as interpreted by the early church and by the Fundamentalists even to-day, have no basis in fact, either historical or scientific. Belief in such occurrences is synonymous with belief in miracle, and such belief has received its death knell.

The contention that the myths, legends and miracles of other sacred literatures which find their counterpart in our Bible have been copied from the Hebrew will not bear the light of critical investigation. Many of them were old long before the Hebrews began the writing of a literature. And it has been proved that of all the peoples of those times the Hebrews were among the most prolific of borrowers. No scholar of standing to-day holds to any other view. Such a belief has grown out of a desire on the part of over-zealous churchmen to find support, even though it be fictitious, for their cherished faith in the uniqueness of Hebrew literature and in its exclusively divine origin.

CHAPTER IV

MIRACLES OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

The miracles of the New Testament cluster about the idealized figure of Jesus, one about whom more has been written and less is known than with regard to any other great personage of history. The so-called lives of this man of mystery are nine-tenths fiction. The Gospels are wholly unhistorical. That he was a most extraordinary man—a man who impressed his age and generation as no other man has ever done—there can be little doubt. Indeed, to have gripped his followers as he did in the short space of a ministry of only three years' duration implies a man of wonderful personality. But as to real knowledge of the man, the world is pathetically ignorant. For the belief that there was anything whatever of the supernatural associated with his birth, his life and his death, there is not a shadow of solid historical basis.

A supreme tragedy of theological and religious thought has been the entirely false assumption that the Gospels are in any sense real history. Let us remember that Mark, the first of these religious narratives, was not written until at least forty years after the crucifixion. The intervening period had

been one of unparalleled spiritual unrest. This Man of Galilee, this radical reformer, who had stirred the Jewish people as no other man had done for centuries, had come and gone. In some way a belief in his early return had become current throughout Palestine. And, if he were to return soon, it was not deemed necessary to write down anything regarding his life and works. In the years immediately following his death, there were many who had actually seen him and heard him speak. These recollections were keen and vivid. There were some among them who remembered his very words, or the substance of what he had said. These they treasured in their memories and passed on by word of mouth. But let it be emphasized that there are no first-hand documents preserving a record of the life and ministry of Jesus. Much of what he said and did is of course unknown. Even the words and sayings attributed to him are only what people remembered that he had said, and most of those who had actually heard his words were dead at the time these sayings were written down. It was in the succeeding generation that the Gospels were compiled. And let it be noted that these books were compilations, and not actual biographies written by men who had associated with Christ. This view no longer has any credibility. There is little in the contemporary history of other nations to substantiate the Gospel narratives. There is some evidence of a common source of information preceding the authorized Gospels and upon which the com-

pilers of them drew. But that these glorified narratives in any real sense represent the authentic history of actual happenings there is no confirmation. That is the big fact which any one who wishes to consider these writings with intellectual honesty and open-minded fairness must accept. People may allow their emotionalism to run away with their judgment and talk of a faith that transcends the mere facts of recorded history, but such a faith is a delusion.

But when, as the years passed, Christ did not return, there came a time long after his death when men began to feel the need of a written record of his words and works. But how was such a record to be obtained? In the time of Christ's ministry, the necessity of preserving accurate accounts of important happenings had not established itself. The writing of history was a comparatively unknown art. The importance of historical accuracy was not appreciated. Gross exaggeration and the indiscriminate intermingling of fact and fiction were the chief characteristics of such writings. These writers did not deliberately and intentionally misrepresent with the purpose of leading succeeding generations astray. They were simply infants, so to speak, who had not yet developed the sense of literary integrity.

And so when the time arrived to compile the life and works of this reformer whose career had brought him to an ignominious death on the cross and who had come to be regarded as another di-

vinely-sent savior of mankind, those who assumed the task were compelled to do the best they could with the material at hand and, of necessity, they wrote in accordance with the spirit and standards of the time in which they lived. Intermingling with the historical traditions of this Man of Nazareth and Bethlehem was a mass of wonder stories, legends and miraculous tales which had sprung up in the generation since his death. It could not have been otherwise, for that was an age of credulity, ignorance and superstition, in which people devoutly believed in signs and wonders. In such an atmosphere, it was but a step to the distortion of some simple act or to the embellishment of the account of some event, a little out of the ordinary, into a miraculous happening. Then, as the story was told and retold many times, it would in the course of a generation or more come to be invested with a setting and a purport totally at variance with the nucleus of truth from which it originally started.

But there was another factor quite as significant as the foregoing. The patterns set by antiquity in the field of sacred writing must not be ignored. No other great religious prophet or savior had been unattended by miracles. The Christ of Palestine must not be wanting in this important respect. The East had been saturated with such stories for centuries. If his followers were to establish him on a footing equal with that of any of his predecessors, they, too, must represent him as a man of wondrous works. To do less they doubtless felt would have

meant suicide to the cause they represented. The immediate followers of Christ and those to whom the story of his life had been told had come to have a deep and abiding conviction of the extraordinary degree of divinity of this Man of Galilee. They believed in all of the wondrous stories that had come into circulation. Had not such miraculous events occurred in the lives of Zoroaster, Buddha, Krishna and many other religious prophets of former times? This was an uncritical age. Why should they not also be true of the Christ? In fact, how could he have been a savior if the miracle stories were not true? Such were the questions that must have crowded upon the minds of those who assumed the task of writing the story of the lowly Nazarene. An age of easy credulity, coupled with unbounded zeal for the establishment of a new faith, seemed to make imperative the painting of a Christ in colors more brilliant than those of any predecessor. Indeed, it was not difficult to believe in those times that this wealth of myth and legend which had become associated with Christ was essentially true.

And then, too, there appears to be a gradual heightening in the effects sought in the miracle stories as we pass from Mark, the first Gospel, through Matthew, Luke and John. A quite evident purpose to convince of the reality of these alleged occurrences, an artificiality not associated with actual events, is easily discernible. We see in this process of miracle weaving the art of literary craftsmanship.

THE MIRACULOUS BIRTH

As has already been told in another place, Zoroaster, Buddha and Krishna were virgin-born. So, too, were Horus of Egypt, Bacchus, Perseus, King Cyrus, Plato, Alexander the Great, Ptolemy, one of Alexander's generals, Romulus, reputed founder of Rome, Julius Cæsar, Augustus Cæsar, Apollonius, Pythagoras, Æsculapius, great performer of miracles, and many more. Even the Mexicans in the New World worshiped a virgin-born savior before the landing of Columbus. It was the custom in those times to attribute a miraculous conception to all great personages.* These stories had long been current in the East. Doubtless men believed them. It had been a tradition that all great characters must be sons of gods. Particularly was this true in the Greek world. That this tradition was familiar to the compilers of the Gospels, there can be no question. They felt under obligation to make the birth of Jesus miraculous. For how else could they convince those who had not known him of his divinity and God-like character? He must not be allowed to suffer in comparison with the leaders of pagan peoples. Justin Martyr, an educated Greek Christian of the first and second centuries, in addressing Antoninus Pius said: "When we say that the Word, who is the first birth of God, was produced without sexual union, and that he, Jesus Christ, our teacher, was crucified and rose again and ascended into

*Doane: *Bible Myths and Their Parallels in Other Religions*, Chapter XII.

heaven, we propound nothing different from what you believe regarding those whom you esteem sons of Jupiter."* And again: "If we affirm that he was born of a virgin, accept this in common with what you accept of Perseus."

Thus one of the first interpreters of the Gospels to the pagan world argued in effect that it was as fair to attribute a virgin birth to Jesus as it was for the Greeks to do the same with reference to their great personages. Indeed, it is thought that the idea of the miraculous conception of Jesus had a Greek origin. The immediate successors to the "congregation at Jerusalem" were the Ebionites. Eusebius, the first ecclesiastical historian, tells us that these people believed Jesus to be "a simple and common man," born like other men "of Mary and her husband."† In speaking of these people, Gibbon, the historian, says, "The familiar companions of Jesus of Nazareth conversed with their friend and countryman (Jesus), who, in all the actions of rational and human life, appeared of the same species with themselves. His progress from infancy to youth and manhood was marked by a regular increase in stature and wisdom; and after a painful agony of mind and body, he expired on the cross."‡

This sect of early Jewish Christians did not see in their master more than *man*. Because of this belief, however, they were bitterly persecuted and eventually their organization disappeared.

---

*_Apology_, Ch. XXII.
†Eusebius: _Ecclesiastical History_, Lib. 3, Ch. XXIV.
‡Gibbon: _Rome_, Vol. IV, pp. 488-489. (1876 Edition, 6 vols.)

A number of the early sects of Christians were comprised under the general name of Gnostics. They maintained that Jesus was a mere man, born like other men, but that he was of extraordinary goodness and virtue. Of them, Irenæus said, "Some have the vanity to think that they may equal, or in some respects exceed, Jesus himself."*

Cerinthus, the leader of another early sect, represented Jesus "as the son of Joseph and Mary, according to the ordinary course of human generation, and not as having been born of a virgin. He believed nevertheless that he was more righteous, prudent and wise than most men, and that the Christ descended upon and entered into him, at the time of his baptism."†

The Docetes, a large and important sect of Asiatic Christians, denied the truth of the Gospels, as far as they related to the miraculous birth and early years of Jesus's life.‡

Thus, there was no unanimous conviction, even among the early Christians, as to the divine origin of Jesus. Not until, centuries later, a council of bishops decided that he was "God himself in human form," who came to earth, as did Krishna of old, to redeem mankind, was the question finally regarded as settled.

But let us examine this matter from the standpoint of the Gospels themselves. Mark, the oldest

---

*Irenæus: *Against Heresies*, Bk. I, Ch. XXIV.
†*Lardner's Works*, Vol. IV, pp. 395-396.
‡Doane: *Bible Myths and Their Parallels in Other Religions*, p. 136.

and considered by scholars as the most authentic, has nothing to say about Bethlehem or the miraculous birth. Neither are any birth stories to be found in John. They appear only in Matthew and Luke, and by many scholars they are regarded as later additions to the original manuscripts.

That the genealogies contained in Matthew and Luke, tracing Jesus's ancestry back to David, are artificial and unhistorical is quite evident. They neither agree with each other nor with the previous records of the Old Testament. In Matthew's Gospel, the making of fourteen generations from Abraham to David, fourteen more from David to the Babylonian captivity and an equal number from that event to the coming of Christ must be regarded as wholly fictitious. And yet these genealogies must have been prepared at a time when he was regarded as of purely human origin. If he were not so regarded, there was no point whatever in including them in a supposed record of his life. Their purpose was, of course, to substantiate the imaginary interpretation of a prophecy making the Messiah of the lineage of David. The presence of these alleged ancestral records, false though they be, affords strong evidence of the view which makes the virgin birth legend a later addition. Whoever thus clumsily thought to give support to the belief in the divine character of Jesus failed to see the utter inconsistency involved in ascribing the two accounts to the same individual. Jesus could not be both a lineal descendant of David and "conceived by the Holy

Ghost." As a matter of fact, both contentions are undoubtedly wholly fictitious.

Throughout the Gospels, Jesus is repeatedly spoken of as the *carpenter's son* or *the son of Joseph.* No utterance attributed to Jesus himself betrays any knowledge of a royal lineage or a virgin birth. Even Mary, his mother, failed to understand him, and she and her other sons put down his prophetic enthusiasm to insanity. Declaring that "a prophet is not without honour, save in his own country, and in his own house,"* Jesus exalted his faithful disciples above his incredulous mother and brothers. When as a lad of twelve he was found talking words of wisdom to the wise men in the temple, his parents failed utterly to understand his statement that he must be "about his Father's business." But surely, were the birth stories true and had the angel of the Lord actually appeared unto Joseph and Mary apprizing them in advance of the birth of such a wondrous son, they would not have appeared completely mystified at his later acts and words. The simple fact is that these alleged biographies are clumsy fictions. They neither agree within themselves nor one with the other. That men for nineteen hundred years should have professed to believe in pious fabrications whose mythical character is so entirely evident is one of the profoundest mysteries of the centuries. It is proof supreme that, when men come to a matter of religion, emotion rather than reason takes possession of the mind.

Matthew 13:57.

As to the matter of the miraculous appearance of angels, does any one believe that such wholly elusive, utterly intangible beings ever came to earth from an unseen world to converse with men or to interfere in the slightest degree with their affairs? The single fact that angels figure in these birth stories should of itself brand them as legendary. There is no more basis for belief in angels than there is for belief in fairies. But the Luke narrator, in putting into his account the "Song of the Heavenly Host," was simply following the examples which had been set for him in the legends regarding Krishna and Buddha. Beautiful as this pastoral poem is, it must be regarded as pure imagination, invented with a view to preserving intact the savior legend of antiquity.

And the "Star of Bethlehem"—that was a direct outgrowth of the current belief in astrology and of the mythical notion that every great personage is born under a particular star. Stars or comets had, according to legendary history, attended the births of other great prophets and leaders of men. A star must also be present at the birth of Christ. In his *Life of Christ** Doctor Geikie said, "The Jews had already, long before Christ's day, dabbled in astrology, and the various forms of magic which became connected with it. . . . They were much given to cast horoscopes from the numerical value of a name. Everywhere throughout the whole Roman Empire, Jewish magicians, dream expounders and sorcerers, were found." Astrologers swarmed

*Vol. 1, p. 145.

throughout ancient Persia and were consulted upon all important occasions. The Buddha* had his star and so did Krishna,† as well as every other Indian Avatar. In the legends of the Jewish patriarchs, it is asserted that a brilliant star shone at the time of the birth of Moses.‡ According to popular legends, Abraham** had "his star," and "its brilliancy outshone all the other stars."

It is significant, too, that this miraculous star was seen only by Wise Men of the East, the birthplace of astrology, for the saviors of the East had also been visited by Wise Men, who in each case brought gifts to the heavenly infant, even as they did to Jesus. And why, if this story were true, did not the star guide these men directly to Bethlehem, and not to Jerusalem? Why did it disappear and only reappear when, after inquiry in the capital city, they had been set upon the road to Bethlehem? Knowing, as we now do, that all stars are at almost infinite distances from the earth, does not the absurdity of making a particular star stand directly over the "place where the young child lay" become at once apparent?

It is important also to note that these Wise Men, the Gentiles, came to worship the "King of the Jews" and that they understood the term "king" to mean an ordinary political ruler. And so did Herod make the same interpretation. The idea of

---

*Bunsen: *Angel-Messiah*, pp. 22, 23, 33.
†*Vishnu Purana*, Book V.
‡Higgins: *Anacalypsis*, Vol. I, p. 560.
**_The Bible for Learners_, Vol. III, p. 72.

a heavenly-sent savior of mankind was entirely foreign to their thought.

In passing, let it be said that the bloody deed of Herod in slaughtering the innocents is mentioned nowhere else in history. Had such a massacre actually been perpetrated by a provincial ruler of the Roman Empire, the audacious crime could not have escaped the notice of contemporary writers. But the story of the "dangerous child," whose life was sought by the evil rulers, jealous of the supposed rival to their authority, was a well-known myth of the ancient world and had been current in the East for centuries before the coming of Jesus. The Matthew and Luke narrators simply felt that this time-honored legend must form a part of the biography of the Christ. It had been told of Buddha, Krishna, Zoroaster, Horus, Perseus, Hercules, Bacchus, Romulus and Remus and many more.* The tale is not peculiar to the Hebrew record and, since the slaughter is nowhere else mentioned, we are compelled to appraise it for what it is worth—an appropriation from the treasure-house of ancient myth and legend for the purpose of placing the Christ on terms of equality with his predecessors.

The story of the stable and the manger throws additional light upon the fictitious character of the miraculous birth legend. The Matthew account implies that Jesus was born in a *house*, while the Luke version would lead one to suppose that his birth-

*Doane: *Bible Myths and Their Parallels in Other Religions*, Ch. XVIII.

place was a *stable*. But the apocryphal Gospel of "Protevangelion" states that the birth occurred in a *cave*. Eusebius,* the first ecclesiastical historian, tells us also that the birth was in a cave. These three designations, however, are quite in keeping with the ancient legends regarding the birthplaces of other saviors. All had either been born in humble surroundings—such as a cave, a stable or a sheep-fold—or had been placed there shortly after birth. The apocryphal Gospel† states that, when Joseph and the midwife whom he had gone to get returned, a bright cloud overshadowed the spot and "on a sudden the cloud became a great light in the cave, so their eyes could not bear it. But the light gradually decreased, until the infant appeared and sucked the breast of his mother." This story of the cave and the heavenly light is found over and over in ancient literature. When this myth is found in our Bible, many profess to revere it and pronounce it a genuine historical record. When, however, it is found in precisely similar form in still more ancient records, the story is at once branded as spurious. But, if it were true of Jesus, why should it not be equally true of all the other saviors of antiquity.

Thus, we see that in the miraculous birth story regarding Christ there is nothing unique, nothing that in any way distinguishes it from the many that had gone before. Why, then, should we still cling

**Life of Constantine*, Lib. 3, Chs. XL, XLI, XLII.
†*Protevangelion.*

to it? Although nineteen hundred years of false teaching have ground this myth into the very fiber of religious thought, why, when it has been found to have resulted from the servile copying of an ancient legend, should men seek to make it an article of Christian faith? The known facts of biology have told scientists for a century and more that an immaculate conception is a sheer fiction. Did we not have the overwhelming abundance of evidence of the mythical origin of this story, science would be compelled to pronounce it such. Every thinking person knows in his heart that a virgin birth is an impossible event. The story strikes its roots far back into that prehistoric period of blissful ignorance when men had not come to know the real cause of human birth. In those times, spirits and deities were regarded as the generating agencies. All births were in the nature of immaculate conceptions. People had not come to associate the advent of a new life with any sexual action. And when they did, the idea of a virgin birth without human intervention was difficult to dislodge. It was felt for centuries that great personages must be the sons of gods. Particularly, must the saviors of mankind be free from the taint of lust and passion in their generation. And so the miraculous birth stories sprang up and thrived. It is most unfortunate that the compilers of the Gospels thought it necessary to weave this fable into their accounts of the Christ. It is quite significant, too, that Mark, John and Paul do not mention it. Paul was the first to write and

surely, had this story become at that time a fixed article of Christian faith, he would have mentioned it. His silence upon this, as well as upon all other alleged miracles, speaks volumes.

And so we must conclude that Jesus was a man, differing in no way from other men in his birth. He is one of the greatest figures among men. Like all other men, he was divine. His sole claim to uniqueness lies in the fact that he undoubtedly represented a larger measure of divinity than any other man who ever lived. But that he was more than man, no thinking individual can believe. We know so little of his real life that any other assertion can be nothing more than a gratuitous assumption. That he came to earth to save men from their sins is true in the same sense as when we say that Louis Pasteur came to earth that men might have life and have it more abundantly, or that Abraham Lincoln came to free the black man from his bondage. Man that Jesus was, his message to mankind is simply that of a great example and of a noble and God-like philosophy.

That the stupendous deception of the miraculous birth can still persist in a modern world is evidence supreme that men are not yet far removed from the ways of primitive thinking.

THE MIRACLES OF JESUS

In speaking of the miracles of Jesus, G. Stanley Hall, in his *Jesus, the Christ, in the Light of Psychology*,* says, "But if the repute of a wonder-

*P. 597.

worker made his success in his day and through the earlier centuries of Christianty, now we have to see and realize that the religion of Jesus is losing its hold upon the cultured world precisely because of the deeds imputed to him that made his early followers accept him. This crass literal interpretation is to-day the chief handicap that prevents the acceptance of his teaching or the admiration of his life. Our modern mind can not worship without subtle psychological, even if unconscious, reservations, not to say stultification, a being whose claim rests upon multiplying loaves of bread, changing water into wine, walking on the water, raising the dead to life, healing instantly a group of lepers at a distance by a word, etc., for such things belong to the shadow-land of fiction and not to that of historic fact. The future of Christianity demands the emphatic and authoritative repudiation of such encumbering infantilism, necessary and inevitable as this was at the beginning of our era."

And again, Professor Hall says, "True miracles are things which are absolutely false. They never happen. There are of course phenomena of a higher order than what is yet known; but they are not these, for these are only fabrications, and that of a low order."*

When we consider the high standing and eminent position occupied by the late G. Stanley Hall as an educator, a psychologist and a thinker, such statements as the foregoing must give pause, even to the

*Jesus, The Christ, in the Light of Psychology, p. 609.

staunchest Fundamentalist. And the verdict of Professor Hall is that of every enlightened thinker to-day who has given any consideration to the problem of miracles—their rise, decline and fall. The simple fact is that in those times people could not think religiously, except in terms of miracles. So ignorant were they of natural phenomena and the processes of health and healing that anything might be a miracle. Furthermore, it was an axiom among the ancients that every great leader must be credited with many wondrous works. Only thus could Jesus be made to meet the requirements of the Messiahship and fulfil the false interpretations of Hebrew prophecy. Time and again did the multitude and even the disciples demand of him "mighty works" as a sign of his divine mission, or at least this is so recorded in his alleged biographies. But that these miracles of Jesus have any historical basis of truth whatever is denied, both by the findings of Christian scholarship and the researches of modern science.

Let us examine some of these impossible tales with which Jesus's over-zealous biographers sought to fortify for all time their claims to his Messiahship. Although the Gospel narrative represents him in the wilderness as positively refusing to give any miraculous proof whatever of his divine mission, we find him according to the fourth Gospel at the very beginning of his ministry engaged in the performance of a fabulous feat, utterly impossible as a scientific fact and devoid of any useful purpose. This

was the alchemistic miracle of changing water into wine, apparently with nothing more laudable in view than the awing of the multitude and the prolonging of the revelries of a merry bridal banquet. Any schoolboy with only a slight acquaintance with chemistry knows that alleged miracle to be a pure fabrication. To say in defense that "with God all things are possible" is simply pious camouflage, and the schoolboy knows it. Why not meet the situation fairly and honestly and consign this miraculous event along with the story of Jonah and the Whale and a host of others to the limbos of prehistoric myths and legends? Only thus can the Sunday School and the church retain their hold upon the youth of this land. That is the suicidal fact to which Fundamentalists seem blissfully and utterly oblivious. The time-honored mantle of historic sanctity can no more cover religious error than it can political error, when once the error has been discovered. And the fallacy of miracles is no longer a veiled secret.

Bacchus, virgin-born son of the Greek god Zeus, had also changed water into wine before the reputed miracle of Jesus.* This ritual-miracle was an ancient rite regularly performed at certain Greek festivities. It symbolized that force in nature, embodied in the wine-god Bacchus, which changes the sap of the vine into grape juice. It was simply appropriated by the compiler of St. John's Gospel and used

*Dupuis: *Origin of Religious Belief*, p. 258; Higgins: *Anacalypsis*, Vol. II, p. 102.

to embellish the record of this new wonder-worker whose alleged achievements must not be allowed to suffer by comparison with those of any who had gone before him.

The quite obvious intent of the miracle of the *loaves and fishes* was to impress upon the minds of people then living and of succeeding generations the validity of the contention that "This is of truth that prophet that should come into the world." That the truth of such a monstrous feat would ever be questioned did not occur to those simple-minded fabricators. Was it not a time-honored custom to ascribe such "signs" and "wonders" to great religious leaders? What mattered the truth when the reputation of a favorite hero was at stake? How much more secure would Christianity be to-day if those misguided writers had not featured in such overshadowing fashion the importance of exaggerated tales and impossible feats! As Professor Hall has said, "Forever grateful as the world must be to the authors of the four Gospels (for they constitute by far the best part of the New Testament), their merit does not consist in themselves, for they did not write infallibly and had no inspiration save that which came from the exalted and inspired character who was their central theme. They give us well-meant and painstaking reports of the most impressive life that the world has contained. Compared to their theme and task, their intelligence and performance are wretchedly inadequate and often misleading. If their blindness had been removed how much more

precious their records, for to see Jesus through them is to see through a glass darkly."* The nucleus of historical truth at the center of any particular tale, if there were any, has been totally obscured by the insensate desire of these men to make Jesus outshine all other wonder-workers of antiquity.

Again, every high-school boy or girl knows that nearly three centuries before the time of Jesus the great Greek mathematician Archimedes had established a principle with regard to floating and sinking bodies totally at variance with the miracle of the walking on the water. Furthermore, they have proved the truth of this principle in the laboratory. Even had they not done so, they know from common experience that the thing is impossible. Of course, they take that tale with the proverbial "grain of salt." There are many parallels in the literature of antiquity to this walking on the water. Buddha† actually crossed a wide river on a cushion of air, just above the water, thus preventing his feet from becoming wet. The Philopedes‡ were accustomed to run over the Ægean Sea with cork-shod feet, escorting ships far from land. In the Old Testament, too, we read, "The Lord makes a way on the sea, a path in the mighty waters." Job said, "He (the Lord) walks upon the sea as a floor." That any one should ever have wasted any time in trying to overcome the eternal warfare between the accom-

*Jesus, The Christ, in the Light of Psychology, p. 609.

†Beal: *History of Buddha,* pp. 246-247.

‡Hall: *Jesus, The Christ, in the Light of Psychology,* p. 659.

plishment of this miraculous feat and the natural law which denies its possibility constitutes a wonderfully illuminating commentary upon the lengths to which a warped intellect will go in its effort to substantiate a religious dogma.

If we were searching for a first-class example of a prodigious accomplishment by a master magician, we could find nothing better than the story of the fish that was miraculously made to yield a coin for the payment of a trivial tax assessed against Peter and Jesus. That such a petty sleight-of-hand performance should be attributed to the personage who is proclaimed to be coequal with the God of the universe only tends to bring the religion of which he was the founder into contempt among thinking men. Such an event associated with a being whom men are told is the greatest example of divinity the world has ever seen is simply ludicrous. The attempt to make the Christ bear such a burden of the impossible only drives one who has any respect for intellectual integrity into the camp of skepticism and agnosticism. Men can not and will not worship a Christ, one of whose chief claims to recognition rests upon his achievements as a magician. When in our calm judgment we know that such a tale as the foregoing is utterly untrue, must we not conclude that all the other miraculous stories told of this man are either deliberate forgeries or adaptations of ancient myths and legends to suit the needs of the founders of a new religion?

Let us take the miracle of the transfiguration of

Jesus on the mountain in the presence of Peter, James and John. This story is quite similar to alleged experiences of Zoroaster.* It fairly glows with the supernatural. We are to believe that Jesus's face shone as the sun and his garments became glistening white, while two men of former ages whose very existence has been regarded by some as mythical came and talked with him, after which a voice speaking out of a cloud said, "This is my beloved Son: hear ye him." If we were to find this tale anywhere except in the Bible, we should have no hesitancy in assessing it at its true value—namely a pure fabrication invented for some pious purpose. Its presence in the Gospels in no way alters the case. A fabrication is a fabrication wherever it may appear. As we examine this wonderful story, we must remember that there is no authenticated instance of any one who ever returned from the dead and conversed with mortal men. We know, too, that God never spoke with a human voice. Finally, it is quite clear that the purpose of the tale is to give additional support to the contention that Jesus was the son of God. Surely, thought the Gospel narrator, no one can question the authority of the voice of God speaking out of a cloud. However, a proposition which needs the artificial support of such a transparent invention must be regarded as being in a very bad way.

Of all the accounts of the miraculous casting out of devils by Jesus, the most remarkable is that of

*Bunsen: *Angel-Messiah*, p. 45; Beal: *History of Buddha*, p. 177.

the possessed Gadarene. We are told that the demons in this poor insane man, designated as legion because they were so many, actually entreated Jesus that he would not command them to depart into the abyss but rather that they be permitted to enter into a herd of swine feeding on the mountain. And when this permission was granted, "Then went the devils out of the man, and entered into the swine: and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the lake, and were choked."* The people who came from the city to see what had happened "found the man from whom the demons were gone out, sitting, clothed and in his right mind, at the feet of Jesus: and they were afraid." Whether or not Jesus actually did soothe the troubled spirit of a demented man and partially or wholly restore him to his right mind, we do not know. So possessed were the narrators to make a supernatural story out of whatever the event may have been that the nucleus of truth, if there was any, is utterly lost. The idea of devils thus speaking and of passing magically from a human being into a herd of swine is so grotesque and repulsive as to throw into ill-repute the personage to whom it is ascribed. The casting out of devils, however, was a common practise throughout Palestine, both before and after the time of Jesus, and his fiction-writing biographers could not allow him to be outdone in this supposedly important activity. That the individual who had coexisted with God from the beginning of time and to whom he had

*Luke 8:33.

delegated the creation of the universe should engage in such unseemly business constitutes a gulf impossible to bridge. That we should believe to-day that this picture of the Supreme Deity, depicted largely in terms of human magic, represents the real truth of things makes an astounding demand upon human credulity.

The expectation of healing miracles by the Messiah, as suggested by Strauss, is undoubtedly based upon the words of Isaiah: "Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped; Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing."* Beyond question, however, this is figurative language to describe the feelings of joy which the prophet believed would take possession of the exiles upon their return from captivity. But, when this expectation was not fulfilled, the prophecy was interpreted as referring to the coming Messianic age.

Let it be remembered that miracles of healing and even the raising of the dead had been common throughout the East for centuries. We find them in the Old Testament as well as in the sacred literatures of other peoples. These alleged events were of common occurrence and no great prophet was supposed to omit them. Jesus simply had to be represented as healing the sick, making the lame to walk, restoring sight and raising the dead. But that he did no more than what was attributed to his contemporaries is shown from the statement by Justin

Isaiah 35:5-6.

Martyr in his *Apology* for the Christian religion, addressed to the Emperor Hadrian: "As to our Jesus curing the lame, and the paralytic, and such as were crippled from birth, this is little more than what you say of your Æsculapius."* Eusebius also bears testimony to the same miraculous feats. Æsculapius was often credited with raising the dead. For many years after his death "miracles continued to be performed by the efficacy of faith in his name. Patients were conveyed to the temple of Æsculapius, and there cured of their disease."†

A large number of miracles are ascribed to Apollonius of Tyana, who was born about four years before the date assigned for the birth of Jesus, and who was therefore a contemporary of his. He healed the sick, drove out a pestilence from among the Ephesians, expelled a demon from a dissipated young man and, while in Rome, restored the life of a dead maiden. He cured a young man suffering from the dread malady of a mad dog's bite. Chains and prison bars were powerless to hold him.‡

Without going through the list, it may be said that numerous other prophets of antiquity before the time of Jesus had been credited with performing all of the healing miracles attributed to him.

It is not the purpose here to discuss in detail the various miracles of healing attributed to Jesus. One authority enumerates forty such miraculous events

*Apology, I, Ch. XXII.

†Bulfinch: *The Age of Fable*, p. 246; Murray: *Manual of Mythology*, pp. 179-180.

‡Philostratus: *Life of Apollonius.*

recorded in the Gospels, and there is frequent allusion to a large number of unrecorded miracles. Aside from actual touch, the spoken word seems to have been most potent in working the physical change. Over and over we find such statements as the following: "Arise and walk"; "thy faith hath made thee whole"; "be thou clean"; "stretch forth thy hand"; "as thou hast believed"; "thou art loosed"; "thou art made whole"; "go in peace"; "be it according to thy faith"; "thy faith hath saved thee."

In all such cures two elements stand out as being of dominating influence in working the change. They are *intense desire* and *unfaltering faith.* The key to the transformation is to be found in the statement, "Thy faith hath made thee whole." Faith presupposes desire, and the deep desire coupled with the implicit faith, as is well known to modern psychology and medicine, sets in motion mental and physical forces latent within the organism itself which actually produce the change. All that is necessary is to arouse this latent energy. To the extent to which Jesus actually did heal the sick, he was simply the agent or means by which these slumbering forces were stimulated into activity. Such instances of so-called miracles are not miracles at all. They are effects produced in accordance with certain physical and mental laws which science has only recently begun to understand. Such cases of healing are no support whatever for the divinity of Jesus. They have occurred in all ages and in re-

sponse to the same type of stimuli and causes. The idea that the cure was effected by the spirit of Jesus working in and through the regenerated heart of the individual is entirely erroneous. Any one else who could have called forth the same degree of hope, desire and faith could have done as much. Prayer and the present-day faith in Jesus's power to heal are simply fulcrums about which the physical and mental forces which produce the cure move and are brought into action. But of this, more later.

As we pass through the Gospels from the oldest to John, the last, the demands upon our faith in the matter of the healing miracles are constantly increased. The diseases are of longer standing, more serious in their nature and the cure is wrought on more persons. The desire for the miraculous element seems to have been growing. Besides, it is always to be observed that miracles thrive and multiply in direct proportion as we recede from the alleged events described. While it is entirely probable that Jesus did effect cures, there are some among those described which are impossible of belief. The case of the *withered hand* is one in point. No degree of desire and faith could instantaneously restore a shriveled and withered hand merely by stretching it forth in response to the command of a prophet. The restoration of the lame man at the *Pool of Bethesda* is more than likely an imaginary event. Scholars have found no other mention of the existence of such a pool, and the troubling of its waters by an angel is, of course, wholly mythical.

The question "Wilt thou be made whole?" is entirely superfluous. The thrice-told miracle of the *healing of the leper*, one of the earliest attributed to Jesus, staggers faith. That malignant malady is not the type of disease which lends itself to cure in this way. And then again the magical *cure of ten lepers* from a distance, as told by Luke, is utterly beyond the powers of belief. As Professor Hall has said, "To credit the complete, literal, instant and wholesale cure of this dread disease is impossible save for those whose minds are leprous with ignorance and superstition."* The *healing of Malchus's ear* is another wholly improbable tale. Neither could the ear be thus magically restored nor the flow of blood instantaneously staunched. Such feats lie entirely outside of the realm of what is possible in this sort of healing. The inclusion of such an event among the recorded healings of Jesus casts the gravest doubts upon them all. If any considerable number of them, or even one, bear the evidence of fabrication, it may be fairly assumed that all are, to say the least, grossly exaggerated.

Let us turn to the *healing of the blind.* Of the three instances described, we note the customary heightening of the effect as we proceed from Mark to John. In the Bethesda cure, recorded by Mark only, Jesus spat saliva in the man's eyes and also laid on hands. The first application of the hands resulted in only partial success, and a second was required. The circumstantial nature of the case, in

*Hall: *Jesus, The Christ, in the Light of Psychology*, p. 626.

that Jesus led the man outside the city where there were no witnesses, gives a highly fictitious cast to the proceeding. In the Jericho restoration of sight, no saliva was required and only Matthew records the laying on of hands. Mark and Luke aver that it was entirely a faith cure. But John eclipses them all with a third miracle, so well attested and so wonderful as to make the others entirely superfluous. His patient had been blind from birth, and Jesus himself is made to state that this man was born blind "that the works of God should be made manifest in him." Jesus made a mixture of clay and saliva and after applying it told the man to go and wash in the pool of Siloam. He did so and "came seeing."

To make sure that the man had actually been blind from birth the enemies of Jesus called in the father and mother of the man to testify. The man himself was questioned at great length. Surely after such complete evidence, no one could question the power of this miracle-worker to restore sight.

It will be noted that in two of the foregoing restorations of sight Jesus is represented as making use of saliva. Whereas we now regard this as only a filthy source of infection, in ancient times it was thought to have marvelous potency as a healing agent, particularly in the case of blindness. Such cures of blindness were common in antiquity. Thus the Emperor Vespasian, to demonstrate for the procurator of Egypt his divine favoritism, spat in the eyes of a blind man and thereby instantly restored his sight. Æsculapius is also credited with the cur-

ing of two blind men. So were many others. In describing Jesus as a restorer of sight, his biographers only attributed to him what was supposed to be a common power among other prophets and what, as the Messiah, he was expected to be able to do. Whether or not the cases cited were true was of little importance. Two things were paramount: Jesus must be superior to every wonder-worker of former times, and he must fulfil the interpretations of prophecy.

Over against all of these reported instances of the healing of the blind, however, stands the scientific fact that such eyes can be made normal only by prolonged treatment or by very delicate and skilful operations. Cataracts can not be removed by an untrained novice nor atrophied nerve centers thus magically quickened. It is an impossibility to restore sight to an eye whose optic nerve is dead.

No better illustration of the gradual intensification of Jesus's miraculous powers is to be found than in his reported *resurrections from the dead.* The first account is that of the *raising of the twelve-year-old daughter of Jairus,* which is described in each of the first three Gospels. Jesus insisted that the girl was not dead but sleeping, which leaves the very plausible suggestion in the mind of the reader that she was in a swoon or a trance. The impression is given that a miracle has been wrought, but whether life has been restored to one actually dead is left in doubt. Of course, the parallel to the raising of the widow's son by Elijah is very striking.

The second raising from the dead is that of the *youth of Nain,* which is recorded only in Luke. The question at once arises as to why, were this miracle actually true, it was not mentioned by the other Gospel narrators. Surely, an event of such tremendous interest and significance would have been known throughout all Palestine. In this instance, as though to leave no doubt as to the fact of death having taken place, the body was met on the way to burial. Jesus merely touched the bier and called upon the young man to rise, which he did. Inasmuch, however, as burial took place among the Jews within a few hours after the person was supposed to have expired, the certainty of death does not appear to be absolutely established.

The author of John, the last Gospel to be written and the one farthest removed in its composition from the events which it describes, evidently intended that there should be no possibility of question as to the actual death and *raising of Lazarus,* one of the most astounding miracles of all time and mentioned nowhere else in history. This utter failure of the other evangelists or contemporary historians even to allude to it is one of the most extraordinary aspects of this remarkable event. This circumstance at once raises the historical suspicion in unorthodox minds that the episode may be a pure fabrication,—one of those pious inventions for which the sacred writers of that time were so justly famous. As the story runs, Jesus delayed after he had received word of Lazarus's illness and the

request that he come, before he started for the afflicted household. He himself explained that this delay was a deliberate one for the express purpose of showing the "glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified thereby."* That is, his object was to give a compelling demonstration of his own divine power. In some mysterious way, even before he reaches the house, he knows that Lazarus is dead. Apparently, he delayed his coming just long enough to make the event which he intended to stage as dramatic as possible. Arrived at the sepulcher, although warned by Martha that her brother had been four days in the tomb and that his body had begun to decay, Jesus commanded the stone to be removed. Then, thanking God that he has been heard, he states that his prayer is for the purpose of convincing the multitude that he is the Son of God, after which "he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus come forth." And "he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave-clothes; and his face was bound about with a napkin." Thereupon, Jesus said, "Loose him, and let him go." The evangelist's purpose has evidently been accomplished. He has staged a resurrection about which there should be no quibble. Of what became of the resurrected man or what message he brought from another world, there is not the slightest inkling.

No person, not steeped in ignorance and superstition, can profess to believe in this miracle. No-

*John 11:4.

where else, except in the Gospel of St. John whose very authorship is unknown and which probably was not written until well into the second century, is it mentioned. There is not a single plausible feature connected with it. Its structure is artificial throughout. Its purpose is perfectly apparent. But actual happenings have no purpose, at least none that is easily discernible. And yet it is part and parcel of all the other miracles told of Jesus. One is just as true as another, and they are all entirely false. There is no ground upon which an honest man can believe in any of them. We may freely grant that Jesus lived, that he was a remarkable teacher, that he made a most profound impression upon his day and generation, that the Gospels give us, though to a wholly problematical degree, a more or less accurate picture of his personality and some knowledge of his teaching—but that he was in any way supernatural, no man who examines the facts can honestly assert. This fabricated element of the miraculous injected into the Gospels casts suspicion upon the entire record. His biographers overdid their part and have left the world forever groping for the real truth.

As has already been stated, other prophets of antiquity were reputed to have resurrected the dead. On one occasion, Krishna requested a distinguished Brahman to ask of him whatever favor he most desired and it would be granted. The Brahman replied, "Above all things, I desire to have my two dead sons restored to life." Krishna is said to have brought this immediately to pass and to have

presented them in the full strength of their young manhood to their father.* Without a second thought, any Christian rightly rejects this as pure fabrication, and yet he may believe in the raising of Lazarus. Horus, the Egyptian savior, was credited with raising the dead. So was Marduk, the Assyrian god. The resurrections of Æsculapius and Apollonius have already been noted. And there were many others.†

Hosts of other miracles precisely similar to those asserted of Jesus were attributed to all sorts of divine personages of antiquity. Bacchus not only changed water into wine, but he healed the sick, the crippled and the blind. Acetes, a disciple of Bacchus, was thrown into prison but, as his captors made ready for his execution, "the prison doors came open of their own accord, and the chains fell from his limbs, and when they looked for him he was nowhere to be found." And even so it happened to Peter, the disciple of Jesus. The legends of the East "teem with miracles attributed to Buddha and his disciples—miracles which in wonderfulness certainly surpass the miracles of any other religion."‡ Volumes could be filled with the alleged miracles of these and other ancient prophets.

THE MIRACULOUS ATONEMENT

The idea of the miraculous, or vicarious, atonement for the sins of humanity antedates by cen-

Progress of Religious Ideas, Vol. I, p. 68.
†Doane: *Bible Myths*, Ch. XXVII.
‡*Ibid.*

turies the coming of the Christ and the Christian religion. Before the time of Jesus's birth, the poet Ovid, in denouncing this "demoralizing delusion" said, "When thou thyself art guilty, why should a victim die for thee? What folly it is to expect salvation from the death of another."*

The idea of redemption from sin through suffering and death grew out of the belief among primitive men that the gods demanded some sacrifice in reparation for sins committed or as an inducement to avert some calamity. These sacrifices at first took the form of flowers, fruit and vegetables. Then gradually animals were substituted and finally human beings. Slaves taken in war, children, even the "first-born," became the sacrificial victims of this bloody rite. The conviction grew that the gods would accept the life of one individual as atonement for the sins of others. Thus this belief that the sins of the many might be cleansed away through the shed blood of an innocent victim became a part of the common faith of humanity. The heroic self-sacrifice of a prominent citizen for the welfare of his country was to be found even in Greece and Rome. A passage from Cicero says, "The force of religion was so great among our ancestors, that some of their commanders have, with their faces veiled and with the strongest expressions of sincerity, sacrificed themselves to the immortal gods to save their country."† In thus offering a human sac-

*Doane: *Bible Myths*, p. 181.
†*Progress of Religious Ideas*, Vol. I, p. 303.

rifice, the Egyptian priests were accustomed to make this plea: "If any evil is about to befall either those who now sacrifice, or Egypt in general, may it be averted on this head."*

The doctrine of the vicarious atonement of Jesus, the Christ, for the sins of the world is simply a crystallization of this ancient rite of blood sacrifice. It is a relic of paganism and heathenism. It is based upon the primitive assertion that divine justice requires blood. Gradually this idea developed into the notion that an incarnated deity must come to earth and die for the sins of the world. In no other way was it thought that men could obtain remission of sins. However guilty one might be, in becoming a follower of such a Christ, his sins were miraculously washed away. And there have been many Christs. This doctrine was old when Jesus appeared in Palestine.

Krishna is said to have died on a cross. Tien, a divine savior of ancient China, shed his blood "to save the world." So did Osiris and Horus, virgin-born Egyptian gods. The terms "Lord of Life," "the Eternal One" and "the Only-Begotten" were applied to them. The ancient Phrygians of Asia Minor worshiped Attys, a "Savior," the "Only Begotten Son" of God, who died on a tree for the sins of mankind. Adonis of Syria was a virgin-born savior who is said to have been crucified for the sins of men. The Greek savior Prometheus was crucified for the salvation

*Herodotus: Bk. II, Ch. XXXIX.

of the human race. Five centuries before the Christian Era, the tragedy of his crucifixion was enacted in Athens. He was represented as suffering for the sins of men, even as Jesus "was wounded for their transgressions." Bacchus was termed the "Savior," the "Only Begotten Son," the "Slain One," the "Sin Bearer" and the "Redeemer." The Persians believed that Mithras, virgin-born "Mediator between God and man," through his sufferings had redeemed them from their sins. Apollo and Hermes of Greece and Serapis of Egypt were saviors of men. Even in the New World, the ancient Peruvians and Mexicans worshiped a crucified savior. This is shown by their paintings. Crosses have been found in Yucatan with a man nailed upon them.*

Thus we see that the great miracle of the life and death of an incarnated deity for the redemption of mankind is not peculiar to the Christian religion. It had its origin centuries before. In making use of this tradition, the founders of Christianity simply followed their usual custom of appropriating from pagan religions whatever seemed best to serve their purpose.

The unreasonableness of the belief in the miraculous atonement, as expressed by a Boston divine of a generation ago, must appeal to all who think. He said: "No sinner dares to meet the holy God until his sin has been forgiven, or until he has received remission. The penalty of sin is death, and this

*Doane: *Bible Myths*, Ch. XX.

penalty is not remitted by anything the sinner can do for himself, but only through the blood of Jesus. If you have accepted Jesus as your Savior, you can take the blood of Jesus, and with boldness present it to the Father as payment in full of the penalties of all your sins. Sinful man has no right to the benefits and the beauties and glories of nature. These were all lost to him through Adam's sin, but to the blood of Christ's sacrifice he has a right; it was shed for him. It is Christ's death that does the blessed work of salvation for us. It was not his life nor his Incarnation. His Incarnation could not pay a farthing of our debt, but his blood shed in redeeming love, pays it all."*

Jesus can redeem men only as through his example he leads them to better lives. That debts incurred in this struggle of life can instantaneously be removed through a profession of faith in the cleansing power of any savior's death and blood is but an iridescent dream, a beautiful mirage. Salvation, interpreted as the harmonious adjustment of the individual to the eternal justice of the universe, can be attained only through the deepest remorse for wrongs done and the utmost of restitution. Emulating the example and teachings of Jesus is the surest means of keeping one's life free from debt and sin. But that the miracle of forgiveness, without reparation, can result from a simple profession of faith is utterly delusive. It is an idea of pagan origin grafted onto the Christian religion.

*Boston Advertiser, Sept. 3, 1881.

Neither the crucifixion of the heaven-sent savior of mankind nor the doctrine of the atonement are peculiar to Christianity.

MIRACLES OF THE CRUCIFIXION

In keeping with the time-honored legends of antiquity, prodigious miracles occurred at the death of Jesus, even as they had at his birth. In proportion as a personage had been important, particularly a divinely sent savior of mankind, Nature must put on mourning for him. That was the custom of the age. It had been true of others. It had to be true of Jesus.

The Luke narrator tells us that at the time of Jesus's death the sun was darkened for three hours and that the darkness extended over the whole earth. This makes of the phenomenon a miraculous event, for a total eclipse of the sun includes only a narrow belt and lasts for only six or eight minutes, as the shadow cast by the moon sweeps rapidly across the earth. In addition we are told in Matthew that "the earth did quake, and the rocks rent; And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, And came out of their graves . . . and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many."*

At the death of Krishna, "the sun was darkened at noonday, . . . spirits were to be seen on all sides,"† and terror stalked abroad in the land.

*Matthew 27:51-53.
†*Progress of Religious Ideas*, Vol. I, p. 71.

When Buddha died, a terrific earthquake rocked the earth. "The ocean rose under the vibration of this earthquake; rivers flowed back toward their sources; peaks of lofty mountains, where countless trees had grown for ages, rolled crumbling to the earth; a fierce storm howled all around; the roar of the concussion became terrific; the very sun enveloped itself in awful darkness, and a host of headless spirits filled the air."*

And again, we read that when Prometheus was crucified, "the whole frame of nature became convulsed. The earth did quake, thunder roared, lightning flashed, the wild winds rent the vexed air, the boisterous billows rose, and the dissolution of the universe seemed to be threatened."†

When Romulus, the legendary founder of Rome, died, the sun became darkened and remained so for the space of six hours. Darkness also spread over the earth for an equal period of time on the occasion of Cæsar's murder and just before the death of Augustus. The sudden bursting open of closed doors occurred at the deaths of Emperors Claudius, Nero and Vespasian. When Æsculapius was put to death, "the sun shone dimly from the heavens" and other prodigies announced his passing. At the death of the virgin-born Roman deity Quirinius, "the sun was eclipsed or darkened." Similar miraculous events occurred at the death of Alexander the Great. Other examples might be cited.‡

*Rhys Davids: *Buddhism*, pp. 36-37.
†Æschylus: *Prometheus Chained*, last stanza.
‡Doane: *Bible Myths*, Ch. XXI.

Thus we see that no originality is displayed by the biographers of Jesus. They ran true to type. They followed the ancient pattern. Without examination, they thrust into their fictitious narratives a legend whose only purpose was to magnify the Christ and to place him on a par with the saviors who had preceded him. The very age of ignorance and superstition in which this legend arose should stamp it as wholly false. When we know, too, that it is simply an adaptation of miraculous stories, centuries older than the Christian religion, there is no further room for doubt.

THE RESURRECTION AND THE ASCENSION

The *bodily* resurrection and ascension of Jesus, as taught by Christian theology, is probably to be regarded as the most remarkable miracle of all time. Let us examine this alleged event from a few of its many avenues of approach.

Possibly the most significant bit of evidence regarding the historical accuracy of the resurrection is to be found in the utterances attributed by the Gospel writers to Jesus himself. Only by the utmost distortion of his statements in accordance with the proverbial "wish that is father to the thought" can it be made to appear that Jesus predicted a resurrection of his body. The oft-quoted passage in Matthew in which the writer makes Jesus say, "For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the

earth,"* is now regarded by scholars as a pure invention by the compiler of this Gospel. In the parallel passage in Luke, there is no mention of the "three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." Jesus frequently alluded to his approaching death with no reference to a resurrection. Each of the first three Gospels gives in substance, but it is not asserted in his exact words, a statement about his being raised on the third day. But there is nothing intimated about a physical resurrection. Shortly after making this statement, Jesus is reported to have said, "Verily I say unto you, there are some here of them that stand by, who shall in no wise taste death, till they see the kingdom of God come with power." It is the verdict of Christian scholarship that the "rising" to which he had referred meant only the ultimate triumph of his cause. The "three days" was a figurative expression for the intervening time. But even the most extravagant stretch of the imagination can not interpret this vague statement as a prophecy of an actual bodily resurrection from the grave. Had Jesus wished to teach such a doctrine, why did he not do so in terms which should leave no room for doubt? The statement, "Howbeit after I am raised up I will go before you into Galilee," is regarded as a bit of fabricated evidence in support of the later announcement of the angel at the empty tomb, "He goes before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him, as he told you."

Matthew 12:40.

Furthermore, had Jesus really taught the doctrine of a bodily resurrection to his disciples, why did they regard the first reports of this event as idle tales? Why were they so skeptical? Why did they fear his approaching death? Why, had Jesus actually taught his early return and triumphant ascension, were the disciples at first cast into the depths of despair, regarding his cause as utterly lost? Why should this great expectation have been alluded to only in an incidental manner and in the vaguest terms? No, not even in the words attributed to Jesus by the Gospel narrators themselves, can we find any ground whatever upon which to base an antecedent belief in the resurrection.

When we come to the several accounts of the resurrection itself, we find the four Gospels in hopeless conflict. Briefly, the record is as follows:

Mark states that Jesus first appeared to Mary Magdalen, then to two of the disciples and finally to the eleven at meat.

Matthew says that he appeared first to the two Marys, whom he directed to tell the disciples to go to Galilee, where he appeared and commissioned them to evangelize the world.

Luke asserts that Jesus made his first appearance to the two disciples, then to Peter and finally to the eleven at Bethany.

John makes him appear first to Mary Magdalen, then in a closed room to all of the disciples except Thomas, eight days later to all, including the skeptical Thomas, to whom he shows his wounds, and

finally to six of them as they were fishing on the Sea of Tiberias.

Here is hopeless confusion. Evidently, even as late as these men wrote, there was no certain tradition as to a bodily resurrection.

Running through the four narratives, we see the characteristic tendency to heighten the effects as we proceed from the first to the last. Neither the Matthew nor the Luke narrator states whether the appearances of Jesus were in the body or in the spirit. The writer of Luke, however, corrects this. He states that when Jesus made his appearance to the disciples they were afraid: "But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed they had seen a spirit." In passing, we may ask "Why were they afraid if, as is taught, Jesus had predicted his resurrection?" However, to show that he was not a spirit, Luke makes Jesus show the wounds in his hands and feet and records that "they gave him a piece of broiled fish and of a honeycomb. And he took it, and did eat before them." Surely, no one could now doubt the reality of the bodily resurrection.

This story of actually eating fish and honeycomb may have excited ridicule in the minds of those to whom it was told, for the author of John, who wrote long after, did not repeat it. Instead, he makes Jesus appear to a number of the disciples on the shores of the Sea of Tiberias, where he said to them, "Come and dine. And none of the disciples durst ask him, Who art thou? knowing that it was the

Lord. Jesus then cometh, and taketh bread, and giveth them, and fish likewise." But it is to be noted that he did not here partake of the repast himself. Whether it was intentional or not, the absurd part of the Luke narrative is omitted. And yet without that incident in Luke, there would have been no way of "knowing" whether Jesus had appeared in the body or merely as a spirit. Now, had the author of John left the narrative here, this point would still have been in doubt. But he does not.

He stages two more appearances, unknown to the earliest Gospel writers. He makes Jesus, ghost-like, pass through closed doors and appear among the disciples in a closed room in Jerusalem. "He shewed unto them his hands and his side," and they were satisfied. But the author adroitly arranges that Thomas shall be absent. Thomas doubts: "Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe." Apparently the author thinks that, if Thomas can have his doubts entirely resolved, there should never be any further question of the bodily resurrection. Therefore, eight days later there is another appearance, in which Jesus says to Thomas, "Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side; and be not faithless, but believing." Thomas exclaims, "My Lord and my God."

The artificiality of the foregoing story is dif-

ficult to obscure. When we know, too, that John was not written until probably a century after the death of Jesus, there can be little doubt of its wholly fictitious nature.

There are one or two features associated with the story of the visit of the women to the tomb utterly out of harmony with an historical record. In the first place, why did the women come with spices to anoint the body, knowing that they could not roll away the stone from the sepulcher? They had no expectation of a resurrection, and they should have known in advance that their visit would be a fruitless one. In the second place, the presence of the angel brands the whole miraculous event as legendary, for angels have never appeared on this planet outside of the imaginations of myth-makers. Their very existence is wholly visionary.

If, too, the raising of Lazarus had actually occurred, why should not the disciples and the people have been prepared for the resurrection of Jesus? If Jesus could have raised Lazarus, why need there have been so much astonishment and initial unbelief regarding his own return? Despite the fact that the Lazarus raising should have paved the way, it seems to have made no impression. There seems to be good reason for believing, however, that the miracle of Lazarus was invented by the author of John for the express purpose of making less abrupt the transition from the raisings of the dead reported by the earlier Gospels to the resurrection of Jesus.

If Jesus actually reanimated his lifeless body,

a number of questions regarding the physiological aspects of the problem crowd upon the mind. What was the condition of the wounds? Had they miraculously healed? Had the spilled blood been restored, or was he in a state of extreme anemia? Just how was the stiffened form of the corpse again made soft and pliable? How was the heart again set in motion and the circulation started? Was the change abrupt or gradual? How did the coagulated blood regain its liquid state? How was the dead protoplasm restored to its former state of vital activity? If Jesus actually died and rose again in bodily form, all of these questions and many more would have to have answers satisfactory to the requirements of science. That they can have seems obviously impossible. The originators of the resurrection myth were completely ignorant of the stupendous problem which they were foisting upon an innocent posterity. Unless one is still in that state of mind which delights most in fairy tales, he can not shut his eyes to the problem.

In the days following his resurrection, Jesus is made to appear both as a physical and a spiritual being. He talked, walked and ate and at the same time he vanished like a ghost. Closed doors were no obstacle to him. He could not have been both at once.

At the time of his reported appearance to the disciples in Galilee, Jesus is made to give voice to the following utterance: "All authority hath been given to me in heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore

and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." Such an assertion of omnipotence is totally foreign to all the previous utterances attributed to him, and the idea of the Trinity, involved in the latter part of the statement, had not been developed by Jesus's followers at that time. Beyond doubt this passage is a later addition and a pure invention, not even being based upon traditionary utterances handed down by word of mouth.

The ascension into heaven is a legend born of ignorance. Its possibility is based upon the ancient idea of a flat earth and a solid over-arching firmament, beyond which were heaven and the angels. Modern astronomy has shown such an ascension to be utterly impossible, and the myths of pagan literature show us the origin of the story. Many, besides Enoch and Elijah, ascended bodily to heaven. This was a common occurrence among the "sons of gods" in those early times.

PAGAN PARALLELS TO THE RESURRECTION

That the bodily resurrection of Jesus is but an appropriation from pagan literatures of a time-honored legend regarding the ancient saviors of mankind seems to be a reasonable conclusion from a knowledge of the facts.

The Hindoo savior Krishna rose from the dead and ascended bodily into Heaven. At the time of his ascension a wondrous light illuminated the earth and the "whole expanse of heaven." Attended by

celestial spirits and radiant with the light of a divine being, he passed upward to the Heaven from which he had descended.*

After Buddha's death, the coverings of his body unrolled themselves, and the lid of his coffin was removed by supernatural powers. Shortly after, he ascended bodily into heaven. Marks on the top of a high mountain are believed to be the last imprint of his footsteps on this earth. His followers pray to him, as Christians do to Christ, believing thereby to obtain the reward of paradise.†

Zoroaster ascended bodily to Heaven. So did *Lao-Kiun*, a virgin-born Chinese savior, and he has since been worshiped as a god. Splendid temples have been erected to his name. The resurrection of *Æsculapius* is celebrated in the lines of the poet Ovid. The Syrian savior *Adonis*, whose resurrection was widely celebrated among ancient peoples, bore a name almost identical with the Hebrew words "Our Lord." *Osiris*, the Egyptian savior, who was put to death and rose from the dead, received the title of "The Resurrected One." *Horus*, virgin-born son of Isis, rose from the dead. The Phrygian savior *Attys*, bearing the title of the "Slain One," rose to life on the twenty-fifth of March, the primitive Easter.‡ *Mithra*, the Persian savior, was

*Dupuis: *Origin of Religious Beliefs*, p. 240; Higgins: *Anacalypsis*, Vol. I, pp. 131 and 142-145.

†*Asiatic Researches*, Vol. X, p. 129; Bunsen: *The Angel-Messiah*, p. 49.

‡Doane: *Bible Myths*, Ch. XXIII. (N.B. This reference includes all in this paragraph.)

believed to have been put to death and to have risen from the dead. Through his sufferings he was thought to have brought salvation to his people. Monsieur Dupuis, in his *Origin of Religious Beliefs* says, "It is chiefly in the religion of Mithras . . . that we find mostly these features of analogy with the death and resurrection of Christ, and with the mysteries of the Christians. Mithras, who was also born on the twenty-fifth of December, like Christ, died as he did; and he had his sepulcher, over which his disciples came to shed tears." Concerning the annual celebration in honor of this savior, Monsieur Dupuis says, "Funeral ceremonies, like those on Good Friday (in Roman Catholic churches), were accompanied with funeral dirges and groans of the priests; after having spent some time with these expressions of feigned grief, after having lighted the sacred flambeau, or the paschal candle, and anointed the image with chrism or perfumes, one of them came forward and pronounced with the gravest mien these words: 'Be of good cheer, sacred band of Initiates, your god has risen from the dead. His pains and his sufferings shall be your salvation.' "*

Bacchus was put to death, rose from the dead and ascended into Heaven. At dawn on the twenty-fifth of March, it was the custom to celebrate his resurrection with great rejoicings. During these ceremonies the dead body of a young man was exhibited in commemoration of the event.†

*Dupuis: *Origin of Religious Beliefs,* pp. 246-247.
†Ibid, pp. 135 and 256-257.

Hercules, having been put to death, rose from his funeral pile and in a cloud ascended into heaven. So, too, did the Greeks believe that *Memnon* and *Amphiaraus* rose from the dead. They even pointed to the place of resurrection of the latter.*

Balder, the Scandinavian savior, rose from the grave to life and immortality. Even *Quetzalcoatl*, the crucified Mexican savior, is represented in the early hieroglyphics as being resurrected.†

Many more names might be added to the foregoing list. Dunbar T. Heath, as quoted in Bonwick's *Egyptian Belief*,‡ said, "We find men taught everywhere, from Southern Arabia to Greece, by hundreds of symbolisms, the birth, death and resurrection of deities, and a resurrection, too, apparently after the second day, that is, on the third."

The Easter of the Christian Church was originally solemnized on March twenty-fifth, the same day upon which the pagan saviors were believed to have risen from the dead. This celebration, too, had become established and was almost universal before the coming of Jesus. Of its great antiquity we are very certain. In the sacred theaters of the ancients, the birth of a celestial infant who was exposed to danger, eventually put to death and finally raised from the grave to life and immortality was acted, just as we stage the *Passion Play* now.

Thus we see that Christianity is largely built

*Doane: *Bible Beliefs*, p. 224.
†*Ibid.* 225.
‡P. 174.

upon the scaffolding of paganism. December twenty-fifth, the date of Christmas, was also the birth day of many pagan deities. The cross, the first of the Christian symbols, had been a religious emblem for centuries before the Christian Era. The second coming of the pagan saviors was taught, just as it later was of Jesus. It was taught, too, that these saviors had been the creators of the universe and were at the last day to be the judges of the dead. In the Egyptian *Book of the Dead,* far older than our own Bible, "there are used the very phrases we find in the New Testament, in connection with the day of judgment." The practise of baptism, the sacrament of the Lord's Supper and the belief in a Triune God were old long before the origin of the Christian religion.

Thus to summarize, we find that among the pagans, centuries before the time of Jesus, there existed the belief in an incarnate deity born of a virgin; his previous life in heaven; the celestial signs and wonders at his birth; the joy in heaven; the worship of the Wise Men and shepherds; the precious gifts to the heaven-born child; the slaughter of the innocents; the confounding of the wise men; the temptation by Satan; the performing of miracles; the execution, often by crucifixion, at the hands of enemies; and the death, bodily resurrection and ascension into heaven.

Let us free our minds for all time of the false belief that Christianity is a revealed religion of sacred truth, transmitted to the world through an

Incarnate Deity who became human in Jesus. Christianity is in no way unique.

THE TESTIMONY OF PAUL

The testimony of Paul as to Jesus's resurrection is regarded by many as absolutely conclusive evidence of this outstanding tenet of Christian faith and doctrine.

Of all the writers of the New Testament, Paul stood nearest to the life and ministry of Jesus. He wrote probably within fifteen or twenty years after his death. But of the life and teachings of Jesus he seems to have known very little. What is altogether likely, no certain tradition regarding Jesus had arisen at the time Paul wrote. The wealth of myth and legend dealing with the birth, ministry and miracles of Jesus had not yet taken shape. Paul's silence on all of these matters is tremendously significant.

In Paul's thought and teaching, one supreme experience overshadowed all else—and that was his deep conviction of the appearance of Jesus to him while he was on a six days' journey of about one hundred and sixty miles across a desert. In the oppressive heat of noonday, he seemed to see a great light more dazzling in its brilliancy than that of the sun and to hear a voice saying, "Saul, why persecutest thou me?" But there is no suggestion here that this appearance was more than a heavenly vision and, as to the voice, we have no certainty that he actually heard with the physical ear. Whatever

the vision may have been, that it was not a bodily appearance seems to be beyond question. Of Paul's supreme conviction, however, of the manifestation of Jesus to him, there can be no doubt.

But Paul's writings throw much additional light upon this vexed question of a bodily resurrection. He distinctly indicates that the resurrected body of Christians is to be a "spiritual body" and not physical, and he asserts that "flesh and blood can not inherit the kingdom of God." From his additional statement, "But now hath Christ been raised from the dead, the first-fruits of them that slept," we may draw the perfectly logical inference that he regarded the resurrected body of Jesus as being spiritual and not material.

Paul also mentions a number of appearances of Jesus to others than himself, but there is nothing whatever to indicate that he regarded these as differing in any way from the appearance to himself on the Damascus road, namely, that of a heavenly vision. Furthermore, in the passage in which he speaks of these appearances, he says, "For I delivered unto you first of all that which also I received." As Professor Kirsopp Lake* of Harvard University has pointed out, this clearly indicates that Paul, so far as these other appearances are concerned, was merely passing on a tradition which had already sprung up, and not anything of which he had direct evidence. Of where these appearances were he gives no hint, and as to how far they agree with

**The Resurrection of Jesus Christ.*

the traditionary appearances recorded in the Gospels there is no means of knowing. Nowhere else is the appearance to so large a company as five hundred mentioned. Whatever nucleus of reality, if there be any, may lie back of these alleged appearances, it is reasonable to assume that a manifestation to so large a number is, to say the least, a gross exaggeration.

From the foregoing we may draw the present-day conclusions reached by Christian scholarship—that at the time Paul wrote, there was no fixed tradition regarding the miracle of Jesus's resurrection and, whatever these reported appearances may have been, they were not with a physical body. That there were those in Paul's time who disputed the fact of the resurrection is clearly shown by his writings. The tradition did not at once gain widespread currency.

ONE THING CERTAIN

One thing seems to be clearly established—increasingly large numbers of the early Christians came to believe implicitly in the reported fact of the Risen Christ. Whatever the basis for this belief may have been it struck its roots deep into the soil of the early Christian world. That is the miracle of faith upon which the church was built and from which it drew its sustenance. The story of the cross has been the chief theme of Christian preaching throughout the centuries of the church. It has made a tremendous impress upon the human heart, and in

particular did it do so in the early years of the movement. The story of the closing scenes of Jesus's life has been called the "world's great masterpiece of pathos." The sequence of those events, culminating as they did in the death on the cross, has come to constitute the supreme tragedy of human history. Told and retold, dwelt upon in the silence of the soul, each separate incident magnified by the imagination, hallowed in sacred song and sacrament—this unique suffering and agony on the cross, this miracle of resurrected life triumphant over death has touched the depths of human sympathy and scaled the sunlit heights of eternal victory as nothing else has ever done. In very truth, Jesus "brought life and immortality to light."

Whatever one may now think of the actual truth of the resurrection, belief in it became the driving-power of the new movement. It towered above everything else. It gave new meaning to life. For the first time in the history of the race, faith in a glorious life of happiness and joy beyond the grave became possible. The drab, pallid unreal future life theretofore pictured by pagan and early Hebrew thought vanished. The dreary abode of the dead was replaced with the vision of the new Jerusalem. There, all the treasures which the heart holds dear but awaited the coming of the conquerors of death. In the apocalyptic visions of the writer of Revelations, the glories of this new world-order were painted for the contemplation of men. This wonderful new hope was like new wine in its stim-

ulating effect upon the jaded souls of humankind. The greatest of all fears, that of death, had been removed. This gaunt specter of despair ceased to cast its tragic shadow across the paths of men. The unbounded enthusiasm which took possession of human souls amounted in many instances almost to an intoxication of hope and joy. No longer need men approach the grave "like the quarry slave at night, scourged to his dungeon." Instead, like the burst of a glorious sunrise, there dawned upon the consciousness of those who heard the message the sublime faith that death is swallowed up in victory. To proclaim the glad news became the chief object of the followers of the Man of Galilee. This life, mean and transitory at best, ceased to have any value, except as a preparation for the transcendent life beyond the grave. Men even courted death. These were some of the immediate results of a literal, living, throbbing faith in the actuality of an event which, whether real or ideal, marks a supreme turning-point in the spiritual evolution of the race. And in just this fact, figuratively speaking, the chief miracle of the resurrection legend is to be found.

Of course, men had believed in life after death for centuries before the time of Jesus. But the belief had been far dimmer and fainter than it became in the hearts and minds of the followers of this new savior of mankind. For the first time, men came to have an abiding faith in an immortal life of intrinsic worth and of unimaginable grandeur. Because of Jesus's coming and the faith which men

came to have in his life and works and, above all, in the reality of his resurrection, this earth became a better place in which to live. Because of the supreme pattern painted by the Gospel narratives, it has been easier ever since for men to live lives of purity and nobility of character.

It is important to note that one of the chief reasons for the rapid spread of Christianity among the Gentiles was the fact that the soil had already been prepared through the belief in numerous other virgin-born saviors of mankind who had lived, suffered, died and been resurrected. But no other savior had brought to the consciousness of men in such overflowing measure the joyous hope of an immortal life.

THE CHRIST FROM A DIFFERENT ANGLE

Although not rejecting the reality of the miracle of the resurrection, many who have been unable to believe in a bodily reappearance have held to some sort of a mystical vision, whereby Jesus manifested himself unto his followers in the days immediately following his death. Certain it is that Paul was a mystic and there is much consensus of opinion that he saw visions. One of these he interpreted as the manifestation of Jesus. There is, as has already been pointed out, no reason for believing that he regarded the appearances to others in any other light than that of visions.

That there is a real basis for such a belief is the teaching of the Rosicrucian Philosophy, an adapta-

tion of the philosophic systems of Eastern religious thought to the people of the Western world. The distinguishing characteristic of the Rosicrucian system of belief is its claim to definite knowledge concerning the eternal mysteries of life and death. To this new knowledge the more advanced members of the race in increasingly large numbers are constantly attaining, and it is predicted that within five hundred or one thousand years a large proportion of mankind will have participated in this spiritual conquest, which is the next step in the evolutionary progress of the race.

An essential feature of this philosophic system is the Doctrine of Reincarnation, or the Law of Rebirth and Consequence. An individual has lived upon this planet in many previous lives, and he will continue to come back time after time until he has learned all the lessons which this earth life has to offer. Birth is but "a sleep and a forgetting," and there is no such thing as death. So-called death is but the passing of the spiritual being into the superphysical world, where it will sojourn for a period of approximately a thousand years' duration, passing through both purgatory and the various stages of heaven until the time for rebirth comes once more. In this intervening period, the individual appropriates and assimilates all of the lessons which the previous earth life has to teach and stores them up in the form of conscience for future guidance. In each succeeding earth life, the individual is born into precisely the environment, family and otherwise,

best suited to that particular stage of his evolutionary progress. And this hereditary environment is the fruit of one's previous existences—that is, an individual is here and now what he is because of what he has been before. He gets what he earns. There is no such thing as misfortune. The law of retribution is inevitable and absolute. Those among us who seem more favored than others are those who have made the best use of their opportunities in previous lives. Development in any direction becomes capital for the next incarnation. One may become absolutely the master of fate and the arbiter of destiny.

Each individual possesses a number of bodies, or vehicles, chief among which are the physical and etheric bodies. Not only is it believed, but it is asserted with the utmost certainty that the more advanced members of the race, through lives of altruism and service, have reached a point in their evolutionary development where the etheric body, leaving the physical body behind, may enter the spiritual world and, in the full possession of consciousness, see on the superphysical planes. There in the "memory of Nature"—these rare spirits may read the complete history of the race from its very inception to the present moment. They may also obtain definite knowledge of the stages of life and progress in the superphysical realms inhabited by the so-called "dead" in the intermediate period between "death" and rebirth. Whereas only a comparatively small number of the race have as yet

attained to this power and knowledge, it is but a matter of time until all do so. Then the mystery of life and death will have ceased to be and perfect understanding will prevail.

It is also asserted that departed individuals may reappear in their etheric bodies and be seen by any who have developed the gift of superphysical sight, known as the "sixth sense." That there have been many in the past as well as in the present possessing this gift is held to be, not a supposition, but a fact. It should also be stated that the etheric body is an exact duplication of the physical and that to one who is able to see on the superphysical plane the appearance of a friend is exactly the same as it was in life.

Now as to the bearing of all this upon Jesus and his unique life. Jesus was the son of parents who had progressed so far in spiritual development as to be known as "Adepts of the Mysteries." They had risen completely above the desire nature, common to the vast majority of the race at the present time, and were capable of using the sex force without taint of passion. It was because of this fact that Jesus was immaculately conceived, thus becoming free from the materialistic tendencies to which ordinary human beings are subject. In passing, it may be stated that other great personages of the race have doubtless been in the same way immaculately conceived.

The Christ was a great being of a previous evolution, who had progressed much further than any member of our race and to whom was assigned the

special task of coming to our planet to assist mankind in its evolution during a certain period. During the time of his active ministry, a period of three years, he occupied and made use of the physical body of Jesus. The Christ was divine, and so are we. But his divinity was of a much higher order than ours, because he had risen to a position much nearer to the source than have we. At the crucifixion of Jesus, the Christ left the physical body, which he had temporarily occupied, and has since been the indwelling planetary spirit of the earth, quickening by his presence the spiritual life of the race into a higher order of development. At the time of his coming, the race had progressed as far as it was possible for it to go of itself and had actually reached the point of retrogression. In a very real sense, it is maintained that Christ came to redeem mankind.

As regards the resurrection, after the Christ had passed out of the physical body of Jesus on the cross, he reappeared at various times in the etheric body of Jesus, and is therefore spoken of as the Risen Christ. To all who had developed the sense of superphysical sight, this reappearance was very real. Since the etheric body is an exact duplication of the physical body at the time of death, the wounds of Jesus were readily apparent to all who saw him. The Rosicrucian philosophy teaches that the physical resurrection of Jesus is a myth which grew out of the actual etheric reappearances and of the supreme realization to which they gave rise of the

overshadowing fact of Christ's survival of death. Through Christ, the psychic atmosphere of the earth was cleansed and it has ever since been easier for men to live the higher and better life. As the abiding planetary spirit of the earth, he now influences mankind continuously and assists them in their evolution.

That in substance is the teaching of the Rosicrucian Philosophy regarding Jesus and the Christ, who is said to have occupied his body during the years of his ministry. It is set forth here for what it is worth. As has already been stated, it is asserted with the utmost positiveness that this teaching is a matter of actual knowledge, a knowledge which all will possess in the due course of evolutionary progress. Furthermore, the adherents to this faith do not argue; they seek no converts; they are content simply to wait for the eventual acceptance of their doctrines when people have advanced far enough along the path of eternal progress to know that they are true.

This view, at least, escapes the difficulties of a physical resurrection, and from the vast majority of mankind, who firmly believe in a spiritual existence following the physical, it should receive sympathetic consideration.

With regard to the forgiveness of sins, this philosophy holds that Christ did take upon himself the sins of the world, but not in an individual sense. The problem of the individual is the same as ever. The coming of Christ has simply created an atmos-

phere, or psychic environment, which, in the scheme of eternal justice, makes it easier for the individual to make recompense for the wrongs he has committed. This recompense is brought about through deep repentance and genuine reform, together with the utmost of restitution, either to those wronged or, that being impossible, to society in general. It does not matter greatly whether we believe in Christ or not, provided we live the right life. It is the life that counts and not the belief. If one's life is of the highest, it does not matter whether one has any knowledge of the Christ. His evolutionary progress will be secure, and that is the meaning of salvation.

No other system of religious philosophy so adequately explains life as we find it, as does Rosicrucianism. If individuals are here and now what they are because of what they have been before, we can understand the seeming injustices and inequalities of the social order. Why should one individual be surrounded from birth with every advantage that wealth, education and luxury can provide, while another is born into a home of poverty, ignorance and hardship whose environment may lead almost irresistibly to a life of crime? On the basis of an allwise and merciful Creator, such facts are utterly inexplicable. To say that God wills it so is simply the giving up of explanation. There is where Christianity breaks down. In the face of this overshadowing miracle of the inequality of birth, it is helpless. It has no solution to offer. Obviously, it does not represent the truth. Whether Rosicrucian-

ism be right or wrong, Christianity is hopelessly inadequate as a philosophy of life as it is.

THE MIRACLE OF THE TRINITY

Probably the most baffling doctrine ever presented for the thought of men is that of the Trinity. As stated in the celebrated Athanasian creed, it asserts that:

"We worship *One* God as Trinity, and Trinity in Unity—neither confounding the persons, nor dividing the substance—for there is One person of the Father, another of the Son, and another of the Holy Ghost. But the Godhead of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost is all one; the glory equal, the majesty coeternal."

Surely, such an intellectual contradiction can be nothing less than a miracle. But, as we shall see, the promulgation of this wholly inconceivable and unintelligible dogma was simply another attempt to make the religion of the Christ conform to the standardized pattern of antiquity.

This doctrine asserts that the Christ is in all respects equal with God and that he has existed with him from the beginning. Certain portions of the New Testament also make Christ the creator of all things. The writer of the Fourth Gospel, the late origin of which has already been indicated, says, "All things were made by him, and without him was not anything made that was made." And again, "He was in the world and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not." We also read in

Colossians, "By him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by him." And in Hebrews, "God hath spoken unto us by his son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he created the world."

Let us pass over the presumption involved in these man-made statements, which assume as they do to have intimate knowledge of the creation of the universe. Instead, we will examine briefly what Jesus himself had to say concerning this question as to his deityship for, if the doctrine of the Trinity is true, he was certainly God.

Now, nowhere in the first three Gospels, concededly the nearest to the life and ministry of Jesus, do we find any statement that he is God. On the contrary, however, we do find over and over what in substance is a declaration that he is not God. Even in the Fourth Gospel, there are only two passages which might be interpreted as indicating such a belief on the part of Jesus. These are, "I and my Father are one" and "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." But, convinced as the best Christian scholarship is to-day of the late authorship of John, sometime during the second century, there is no probability that these alleged utterances represent sayings of Jesus at all. That this Gospel is historical, now has little support.

Over against the foregoing statements, however, we have many such as these: "I ascend unto my

Father and your Father, to my God and your God," "My Father is greater than I," "I can of mine own self do nothing," "The words which I speak unto you, I speak not of myself, but the Father that dwelleth in me he doeth the works," "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me," "Of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father," and "Why callest thou me good? There is none good but one, that is God." These statements certainly do not agree with the assertion that Jesus is a co-equal partner in a triune deityship, whatever that bewildering invention of theological speculation may mean.

Furthermore, had Jesus been God, would he have prayed to another being? Can it be possible that he prayed to himself? Why did he not demand that his disciples pray to him? He is represented as having been tempted by Satan, but could God have been tempted? On the cross he exclaims, "My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Could God forsake himself? In the Garden of Gethsemane, he prays, "Father, all things are possible unto thee; remove this cup from me: howbeit not what I will, but what thou wilt." Does that sound like the prayer of God?

No, Jesus himself, judging from the statements attributed to him, certainly never claimed to be God.

Neither is there any evidence that the disciples believed him to be God. Had they made such a discovery, would not the New Testament be full of it?

Would not the astounding fact that the God of the universe was dwelling in Palestine in human form have made the most profound impression of the ages? Whatever else may have been omitted from the alleged record, would not the fullest and most unqualified assertions of this most astonishing event have been blazoned on every page? Still, the disciples nowhere betray that they at any time regarded Jesus other than as a fellowman. On one occasion Peter rebuked Jesus, but would he have presumed to rebuke his Creator? Later, Peter denied Jesus. Would he knowingly have denied his God? At the tomb, the disciples, plunged into the depths of despair, believed their master's cause lost. Would such a conviction have been possible, had they known that he was God? Did the actions and words attributed to them after Jesus's death indicate that even then they had made the great discovery? Time and again, we read such declarations as "him hath God set forth," "him hath God ordained," "him hath God raised up." Do these agree with the idea that the apostles believed him to be God himself? Paul said, "There is one God, and one mediator between God and man, the *man* Christ Jesus." Strauss, a foremost authority in this field, said, "There is no doubt that Paul conceived of his Christ as a naturally begotten man."

When one stops to think of the proposition, does it seem reasonable to suppose that the God of this stupendous universe came to our little planet, was born as an ordinary human being, lived like his fel-

lowmen and met death on the cross? Is it not time that we cast all this theological fiction and ecclesiastical rubbish on the scrap-heap of historic fallacies?

Jesus as God offers no example for men. Finite beings can not aspire to emulate the acts and character of a deity. As a deity, Jesus becomes but a myth. As a man, he is the supreme figure of history.

ORIGIN OF THE TRINITY

Although we shall see that the idea of the Trinity was simply the perpetuation of an ancient dogma of heathen origin, let us look first at the way in which it became a tenet of the Christian religion.

It was long after the life and death of Jesus in Palestine before his followers ventured to make him "God himself in human form" and "the second person in the Ever-Blessed Trinity." Scholars have traced to Justin Martyr, a convert to Christianity from the followers of Plato, the first statement of the opinion that Jesus was the Son of God, the second person of the Deity and the Creator of all things. This was about the middle of the second century. Knowing as we do that Plato taught the doctrine of the Trinity centuries before the time of Jesus, it is not difficult to understand from what source Justin Martyr drew his idea. The famous passage in John which reads, "For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one," has long since been regarded as a spurious addition to

the Fourth Gospel and is no longer to be found in it. Gibbon's *Rome** says, "The memorable text (I. John v. 7) which asserts the unity of the three which bear witness in heaven is condemned by the universal silence of the orthodox Fathers, ancient versions, and authentic manuscripts. It was first alleged by the Catholic Bishop whom Hunneric summoned to the Conference of Carthage (A. D. 254), or, more properly, by the four bishops who composed and published the profession of faith in the name of their brethren." Thus, it is seen that the early scriptural warrant for this unthinkable doctrine was a forgery. Even Justin Martyr did not base his opinion upon the Scriptures, but upon "the special favor of God."† But whence the authority for the "special favor" of the Supreme Being of the universe toward a comparatively obscure man of the second century?

In addition to the foregoing spurious passage of John, theologians gradually began to discover in the Old Testament certain expressions which they construed as giving a basis for belief in the Trinity. In the New Testament, the trinitarian formula of Baptism and the ascription of the title of "Son of God" to Jesus were considered to be of much significance. Accordingly, utterly forgetting that the Bible itself is very largely a product of man's thinking, the fathers of the church formulated this most myste-

*Vol. III, p. 556. (1876 Edition, 6 vols.)
†Israel Worsley: *Enquiry*, p. 54.

rious prodigy of orthodox ingenuity. The subtle and profound nature of the problem was discussed in the philosophical and religious circles of Alexandria in Egypt for nearly two centuries before it became a part of the Christian creed. Then, in 327 A. D. in the Councils of Nicæa and Constantinople, this doctrine was established as a fundamental part of orthodox Christian faith. The final decision seems to have rested largely with the crafty and vacillating Emperor Constantine, who finally used his influence in support of an imaginary dogma, wholly unintelligible and totally at variance with the demands of human reason. In vain did Arius of Alexandria contend that the very nature of *Sonship* implies a time when the son did not exist, and that, even granting the Trinity, the three could not be coequal and coeternal, much less a Unity.

Let us now see how the idea of the Trinity had permeated the sacred literatures of antiquity for centuries before it was adopted by the Fathers of the Christian Church. Three being a sacred number in Oriental systems of thought, the Deity was always conceived of as a trinity of some sort.

In Indian theology, we find a divine triad, known as Tri-murti, governing all things. It consists of Brahma, Vishnu and Siva. Brahma is the creative principle of the universe, and corresponds to the Father of the Christian faith; Vishnu is the preserving principle, the reflected aspect of divinity, typified in the Son; while Siva is the principle of destruction and reconstruction—the Holy Ghost."*

*Monier Williams: *Indian Wisdom*, p. 324.

An English traveler in the East said, "Very respectable natives have assured me that one or two missionaries have been absurd enough in their zeal for the conversion of the Gentiles to urge that the Hindoos were even now almost Christians, because their Brahma, Vishnu and Siva were no other than the Christian Trinity."*

As to the antiquity of this belief, Thomas Maurice in his *Indian Antiquities* thus describes a very ancient piece of Indian sculpture, "A bust composed of three heads, united to one body, adorned with the oldest symbols of the Indian theology, and thus expressly fabricated according to the unanimous confession of the sacred sacerdotal tribe of India to indicate the Creator, the Preserver, and the Regenerator of mankind; which establishes the solemn fact that from the remotest eras the Indian nations had adored a triune deity."†

Other examples of ancient Indian sculpture confirm the same conclusion. The Buddhists also worshiped a trinity. The *Origin of Heathen Idolatry* by Faber says, "Among the Hindoos, we have the Triad of Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva; so among the votaries of Buddha, we find the self-triplicated Buddha declared to be the same as the Hindoo Trimurti."‡

The Buddhists of China and Japan worship a trinity, saying of their God *Fo,* "Fo is one person,

*Sir William Jones; *Asiactic Researches,* Vol. I, p. 272.
†*Indian Antiquities,* Vol. IV, p. 372.
‡Quoted in Doane's *Biblical Myths,* p. 371.

but has three forms." The followers of Laou-tsze, a deified Chinese prophet of the seventh century B. C., asserted that "The Source and Root of all is One. This self-existent unity necessarily produced a second. The first and second, by their union, produced a third. These Three produced all."*

Sculptures on the most ancient temples of Egypt represent a trinity. The designation of the second person in the trinity as the *Logos,* or *Word,* is of Egyptian origin. The theology of Alexandria, of which Plato was the foremost exponent, asserted that the Logos was "the second God," an aspect of the Supreme Deity, but distinguished from Him. It was also referred to as "the first-born Son of God." The followers of Plato were among the earliest and most able recruits to the Christian churches of Asia Minor, and it is in them that we find the immediate origin of the Christian doctrine of the Logos. Apollo, whose tomb was in Egypt, was called the Word. So was Hermes.

In the sacred books of the Egyptians we read, "I know the mystery of the divine Word, The Word of the Lord of all, which was the maker of it, The Word—this is the first person after himself, uncreated, infinite, ruling over all things that were made by him."†

The Chaldeans, too, believed in *Memra,* a being inferior only to God, who created and governed the world.

---

*Ibid., p. 372.
†Bonwick; *Egyptian Belief,* p. 404.

The ancient Greeks worshiped God in the form of a trinity. To Orpheus, said to be the oldest poet of Greece but probably a mythical character, is ascribed the following, "All things were made by One godhead in three names, and that this god is all things."* Certain it is that this belief in a trinity among the Greeks is very old. Pythagoras, Heraclitus and Plato taught it. It is well known, too, that the works of Plato were extensively studied by the church fathers. The passage in John, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God," was of Greek origin. In passing, it may be said that the Logos doctrine was of immense importance to the conquest made by the early church. Speaking of the expression, "Jesus is the *Logos*," G. Stanley Hall said, "This password admitted Christianity to the whole system of Greek thought, and irrigated it with fertilizing streams."† This is due to the fact that the Logos idea, an essential part of the doctrine of the trinity, had been a constituent part of Greek philosophy for several centuries before the time of Jesus.

Very significant is the following statement by Justin Martyr in his *Apology* for the Christian religion:

"If we (Christians) hold some opinions near of kin to the poets and philosophers, in great repute among you, why are we thus unjustly hated?

*Indian Antiquities, Vol. IV, p. 332.

†*Jesus, The Christ, in the Light of Psychology*, p. 459.

There's Mercury, Jove's interpreter, in imitation of the Logos, in worship among you, and as to the Son of God, called Jesus, should we allow him to be nothing more than man, yet the title of the 'Son of God' is very justifiable, upon the account of his wisdom, considering you have your Mercury, also called the 'Son of God', in worship under the title of the Word and Messenger of God.''*

The ancient Romans worshiped a trinity, one of their oracles having declared, ''First God, then the Word, and with them the Spirit.''†

The inhabitants of ancient Persia worshiped a trinity similar to that of the Hindoos. Its members were Ormuzd, Mithras and Ahriman. The Assyrians and Phœnicians had a similar worship. The Scandinavians worshiped a triple deity, yet conceived as a unitary god. The inhabitants of ancient Siberia were in possession of this doctrine when the first Christian missionaries arrived there. It was doubtless brought from India. Even in the New World, the ancient Mexicans and Peruvians had evolved this idea of the trinity.‡

Thomas Maurice, an orthodox Christian of the eighteenth century, wrote, ''In the course of the wide range which I have been compelled to take in the field of Asiatic mythology, certain topics have arisen for discussion, equally delicate and perplexing. Among them, in particular, a species of Trinity

*Apology, I, Ch. XX.
†Higgins: *Anacalypsis*, Vol. I, p. 105.
‡Doane: *Bible Myths*, pp. 376-378.

forms a constant and prominent feature in nearly all the systems of Oriental theology.''*

Thus, we see that this stupendous miracle of intellectual ingenuity had a pagan origin, antedating by centuries its adoption by the Fathers of the Christian church. The scriptural warrant for its acceptance has been declared spurious, and only by gross distortion of other passages can any sanction for its inclusion as a fundamental dogma of Christian creeds be found. Even were such sanction to exist in indisputable form, the exercise of the God-given faculty of reason should have forever placed this monstrous doctrine under the ban. So far as the church is concerned, in its inception and promulgation, the doctrine of the trinity represents simply one more of the numerous attempts to make the religion of Christianity conform to ancient patterns.

THE MIRACLES AND CONTEMPORARY HISTORY

Surely, had the God of the Universe dwelt in human form in Palestine for something more than thirty years, during the last three of which he wrought many wonders and performed numerous miracles, this most astonishing career of the ages could not have escaped the notice of contemporary historians. Yet this most extraordinary event seems to have happened absolutely in a corner. Not only was it unknown to the world at large, it was unknown to his own nation and even to his own followers.

Three Roman writers of the time—Tacitus,

**Indian Antiquities*, Vol. I, p. 125.

Pliny the younger, and Suetonius—mention Jesus, but that is all. There is not the recognition of a single miracle or the slightest suggestion that he was God. And yet Palestine was not an isolated country. It lay well within the boundaries of the Roman Empire. Neither was it outside the currents of commercial and intellectual intercourse. For three centuries, Greek learning had flowed through it without interruption. Why did not some historian of the time investigate such remarkable events as these miracles and leave us some record of them? Certainly, such an astounding event as the raising of Lazarus could not have escaped the attention of Greek and Roman contemporaries. Why was it left for unknown writers a generation and more after the death of this man Jesus to write in such detail of events so extraordinary and startling as to have caused them to be heralded to the farthest corners of the Roman Empire? And yet the contemporary world seems to have been utterly in the dark. It knew nothing of these events.

And Jewish historians have done no better. Josephus, Jesus's own countryman and born within two years after the crucifixion, never seems to have heard of any of the miracles. The Talmud speaks of Jesus in harsh and severe terms, but it gives no hint of miracles. Justus of Tiberias, who was born five years after the crucifixion, in his *Jewish History* makes "no mention of the coming of Christ, nor of the events concerning him, nor of the prodigies he wrought."*

*Quoted in Doane's *Bible Myths*, p. 276.

Jesus himself disavowed, according to the statements attributed to him, the working of miracles. Paul says that Israel rejected Jesus's Messiahship because the "Jews ask for signs," and the manifest inference is that Jesus did not give them.

Celsus, a Greek philosopher of the second century, in speaking of the miracles of Jesus, said, "His miracles, granted to be true, were nothing more than the common works of those enchanters, who, for a few oboli (small silver coins), will perform greater deeds in the midst of the Forum, calling up the souls of heroes, exhibiting sumptuous banquets, and tables covered with food, which have no reality. Such things do not prove these jugglers to be sons of God; nor do Christ's miracles."*

Many other philosophers of the time answered the claims that Jesus performed miracles in the same way, asserting that he was simply a necromancer, who had learned his arts in Egypt. Justin Martyr says, "They even ventured to call him a magician and a deceiver of the people,"† while St. Augustine declared a general belief prevailed that Jesus had been initiated in the magic arts of Egypt and had written books on magic. Others charged that he performed his miracles as an initiate of the heathen temples, and not as a Jewish prophet. That is, even in a time when belief in the possibility of miracles was universal, the miracles of Jesus were received with a great deal of skepticism.

*Ibid., p. 271.
†Ibid., 272.

Sculptures in bas-relief on monuments of the first centuries, picturing Jesus as performing miracles, represent him with wand in hand in the accepted guise of a necromancer. Three such monuments show him raising Lazarus, changing water into wine and multiplying the loaves in the wilderness. Jesus is represented by those who lived not long after his time as the same sort of a magician as, for example, Horus, the Egyptian savior.

Another circumstance of much significance associated with the verdict of contemporary opinion is the fact that those regions where Jesus did most of his mighty works and where he preached his gospel were not the places where his doctrine took quickest and deepest root. If the miracles attributed to Jesus really took place, *there* should have been the most fertile soil for the growth of the new religion. That nothing came of the seed planted is a most significant commentary upon the miracles said to have been wrought in those parts.

Even the Gospels represent the scribes and Pharisees as never convinced but always jealous and enraged. The authors of these narratives, too, were masters of the art of fiction. They frequently discribed Jesus as forbidding that a certain miracle be told, thereby giving the impression that he did many of which the public never learned. Knowing also that he would not have sanctioned such fabrications, they might have tried to ease their consciences by reporting these imaginary injunctions to secrecy. Such injunctions, however, were wholly

unnecessary, for even the most public miracles escaped utterly the notice of the world at large.

The inescapable facts of contemporary records compel us to believe that what, were they true, would have been the most momentous events of human evolution up to the present point of time simply did not happen. Jesus lived. Of that there is no doubt. But the miraculous events associated with his birth, his life and his death are completely false. They simply represent the attempts of his fiction-writing biographers to make him conform to the savior-pattern of antiquity.

The conclusion of the whole matter, so far as history is concerned, is this—not a particle of evidence in support of a single miracle relating to Jesus has ever been found.

THE CHRIST MEN WORSHIP

It is an idealized Christ that men worship—not the miracle-working prodigy of fictitious biographies. Deep down in their hearts, very few people believe that Jesus ever performed any miracles. They may vociferate their belief all the more loudly for the very reason that they doubt the truth of the supposed miraculous events. It is like a boy whistling to keep his courage up. While hosts of people believe in the resurrection of Christ, few actually believe that it was a bodily resurrection. Even the Fundamentalists, particularly the preachers, if they expressed their inmost convictions, do not believe in the miracles and the bodily resurrec-

tion. They may think they do, but in their subconscious selves they do not. They believe that incarnate in Jesus was a special manifestation of the Divinity that ensouls the universe, and they may vigorously assert that this Divinity has the power to do anything, but actually they do not believe that God ever violated his own nature by a capricious interference with the orderly operation of the work of his creation. No, it is not upon a belief in the miraculous that men base their worship of the Christ. Neither is it based upon the Christ as actually portrayed in the Gospels.

It is the idealized figure of the Man of Nazareth that men worship—a figure which has been invested with all the wealth of pity, of sympathy, of pathos, of love and of grandeur which have been poured forth from the well-springs of men's hearts and souls during nineteen hundred years of earnest and reverent thought. But of this idealized Jesus there are many portraits. Many artists have sketched his personality. Each has seen him from a somewhat different angle. Yet out of them all has grown a composite picture. But it is largely an imaginative picture. For despite the innumerable volumes dealing with his life and character, little is actually known concerning this man of mystery. Only a few personal incidents here and there give us a glimpse of the real man, and we can not even be sure of the accuracy of those. Although we strain our eyes to catch a fleeting view of his face, we listen for the tone of his voice, we seek to feel the pressure of his

handclasp and we long for a vivid realization of him as a man of flesh and blood—we are always baffled. And so men have idealized him. Every man's picture of the personality of the Christ is a reflection of his inmost soul. And yet it is a picture marred by the sense of bondage to a false belief in a supernatural being. The ideal is that of a God and not of a man. The other-worldness thought of Christ has almost totally obscured the overshadowing significance of his humanity.

If, however, it is true that the actual Jesus behind the ideal was not God in human form, one may ask how it happens that his influence throughout the world has become so tremendous. For it is certainly true that no other life has had such marvelous potency in shaping the destinies of men and nations as has that of this crucified man of Palestine. The answer is to be found in the power of a great ideal. Men came to have faith, faith to the uttermost, in the fact of the Risen Christ, in the reality of his sufferings for mankind and in his ability to save them from their sins. And their faith has made them free. Faith in a great ideal is the most powerful influence in the world. A supreme conviction of the reality of an unseen ally of omnipotent strength sets free hidden forces and brings into action illimitable reservoirs of latent energy. It arouses dormant powers within one's physical and mental being which become simply irresistible in the accomplishment of a purpose. The necessary strength lies within the individual him-

self, ready at any moment to spring into action when the proper stimulus is provided. It does not arise from the presence of another being, as the Christ, in one's heart and life. Faith in the ability of this imaginary presence actually to assist is like the percussion cartridge which sets off a charge of T. N. T. It is the explosive which does the work and not the cartridge. The cartridge simply gives the sympathetic vibration which starts the liberation of the energy. Equal faith in any other supposedly omnipotent factor, though it be wholly imaginary, would accomplish as much. Jesus himself is reported frequently to have said, "Thy faith hath made thee whole." He was simply the means of arousing that faith. And that is all that faith in the idealized Christ does to-day. The psychological mystery associated with a great faith unlocks the doors of human achievement and leads the way to marvelous accomplishment.

When, as one says, he allows the Christ to come into his life and possibly a wonderful reformation follows, the results may be fully explained on the basis of certain psychological and physical forces which his supreme faith has brought into action. He possibly changes from a harsh, cruel, selfish individual into a kind, gentle and benevolent lover of his fellowmen. But he does this through patterning his life after his ideal of the Christ. He changes his thought of men and the world completely, and thought is the motive power in human affairs. Thought arouses faith, and faith in one's innate

ability to be and to do moves the world. "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he," bears the stamp of scientific truth. Faith in the transforming power of the Christ has changed the thought of this man, and a seeming miracle has been wrought. Could equal faith have been aroused in any other way, the same results would have been achieved. Faith in a great ideal is as irresistible as gravity. It can reform the drunkard, purge the unclean, uplift the fallen, regenerate the criminal and ennoble the whole life.

In this triumphant faith in the idealized Christ lies the only miracle ever to be associated with Jesus's name. The ideal of Christ has simply tapped the well-springs of human altruism. It has detonated all that is best in the heart of man. What we call Christian civilization represents the biggest and the most successful putting over of a great idea that has occurred in all history. It is in no sense due to the conscious working of the individual life of Christ in the lives of men. The ability to be and to do has been latent in the breast of man from the beginning of his evolution. It needed the touchstone of a great example and the power of a great faith to set it free. These it found in the supreme example of the idealized Christ. Men may talk eloquently of what the power of Christ has accomplished, but it has been due simply to the slumbering power of the race translated into action through the medium of a great faith. That the actual life of Christ as an unseen presence consciously

influences the affairs of this planet to-day is exceedingly doubtful. When he was crucified on the cross, his action upon this plane of existence ceased as automatically as does that of any other life at death. His example and his teaching, as portrayed by his followers, have had a tremendous influence all through the ages. All great lives continue after death to have such an influence. Christ's influence has simply been greater. That is all.

Had Christ been God, having miraculously lived for thirty-three years in human form, his example would have meant nothing to men. God could never suffer temptation. He could never struggle with sin. He would have been above all the petty annoyances and strife of this earthly life. Had he been associated with God as an integral part of that mysterious triune partnership from the beginning of time and had he come to earth by prearranged plan, there could have been nothing in his life to inspire men. It would all have been in the nature of a staged play. Men could never have looked upon such a Christ as an example. The pigmies of this earth can never hope to emulate God.

It is only by regarding Christ as the man that he was that he can in any sense lead the race to higher levels. And when this idealized Christ of men's hopes and dreams and faith thus stands forth in his true colors, shorn of all that is miraculous and of all pretense at deityship, he becomes the supreme figure of history.

CHAPTER V

MIRACLES OF THE APOCRYPHAL GOSPELS

In all literature, no richer source of the miraculous is to be found than in the Apocryphal Gospels, narrating the wondrous story of Jesus's life and works. The very theme of these books is miracle. We marvel now that, even in that day of widespread belief in signs and wonders, any one could have invented such hopelessly incredible stories and have expected them to be accepted as true. These fictitious narratives throw much light upon the atmosphere of ignorance and superstition in which Jesus lived and preached.*

These Gospels portray the miraculous birth of Mary, the mother of Jesus, as well as of her illustrious son. Joachim and Anna, the parents of Mary, who had been childless for many years, were told by angels separately of the approaching birth of a daughter who should be most blessed of all women. At her birth, David appeared with his harp, gifts were brought and an angel sent a greeting. At the age of three, Mary was presented at the temple, where she ran quickly up the steps, said to have been half an ell high, and danced upon them.

*Accounts of the miracles of the Apocryphal Gospels are found in Donehoo's *Apocryphal and Legendary Life of Christ* and in G. Stanley Hall's *Jesus, The Christ, in the Light of Psychology.*

She was wonderfully mature and precocious. Her raiment was never changed, but remained miraculously the same from the time she entered the temple until her death. Her food was supplied by angels, who frequently brought to her fruit from the tree of life. She performed acts of charity, became a skilful weaver and learned in the law, in form and feature she was beautiful, she was never angry and her chief ambition was virginity.

When Mary was fourteen, her parents decided to consult the Lord by lot as to whom she should marry. The plan provided that all marriageable men should bring their rods to the altar. Then it was to be observed which of these rods budded at the end, producing a flower upon which the Spirit of God settled as a dove. The fortunate possessor of this rod was to marry the Virgin Mary. This honor fell to Joseph, an old man many years a widower, whose rod had been made on the sixth day of creation and had been handed down through Adam, Jacob, Moses and many others directly to this favored son of God. Although Joseph protested that he was too old, he bowed to the Divine Will and conducted Mary to his home. Then he departed. During his absence, the angel Gabriel appeared to Mary and announced to her the coming birth of the Messiah. Upon Joseph's return, he accused Mary of infidelity and was only convinced when Gabriel likewise appeared unto him apprising him of what was to happen. Jesus, too, while yet unborn, spoke, reproaching Joseph for his suspicions.

The birth of Jesus is described at considerable length. It occurred in a cave supernaturally lighted. The temple of Apollo at Rome is said to have fallen in ruins and the earth was sundered in numerous places, so the inmates of Hades could catch a glimpse of the brightness above. A star bearing a cross appeared, and all the other stars sang a chorus. A midwife with a withered hand was made normal merely by touching the child's clothes. This is regarded as the first miracle to be effected through the influence of Jesus. Animals kneeled to Jesus, Wise Men are represented as coming from Zoroaster, statues greeted Mary, the images of animals even began to chant, Bacchus and his demons appeared, confessing that they had been deceivers and impostors, and when the Wise Men left they received as a gift from Mary a swaddling cloth which could not be burned in the hottest fire.

A host of miracles occurred on the trip to Egypt. As Jesus approached, dragons which came out of a cave withdrew. A handful of wheat thrown upon the road immediately sprouted and grew into ripened grain. Springs gushed from the earth. At the command of Jesus, a palm bent down to yield its fruit. A great medicine tree bowed a salute. All the animals of the desert greeted and obeyed him. In a single day he made a thirty days' journey. A cloth which had been worn by Jesus miraculously drove out many devils from an afflicted boy. When Jesus entered a temple, a great idol together with all his satellites fell down and was broken.

The water in which Jesus had been bathed cured a number of lepers. By his mere touch Jesus greatly increased the harvest of wheat. A man who had been changed into a mule was restored to human form. Three seeds thrust into the earth by Jesus immediately grew to mature trees and blossomed. Wherever Mary stuck her finger into the earth, fountains burst forth. These and other miracles, so his early admirers evidently thought, were to constitute indisputable evidence of supernatural powers.

As a lad, too, Jesus performed numerous prodigies. One day he changed a number of kids into boys, so that he might have playmates. Noticing that his father by mistake had sawed two boards of unequal length, Jesus stretched the shorter to the length of the other. Into a vat of indigo he threw pieces of cloth and drew them out in any desired color. He molded images of animals and then gave them life. When the Jews protested against his making mud sparrows on Sunday, he said "Fly," and they did so. He carried fire in his lap without injury. Lions fawned upon him and obeyed him. When robbers approached, a sycamore opened and enclosed him and his mother until they had passed. He restored a dead boy to life. When accused of killing a boy by pushing him from a high roof, Jesus leaped to the ground, brought the boy to life and made him tell who was guilty of the act. Sight was restored to many who were blind by administering water in which he had bathed. A leprous bride was cured by being placed in Jesus's bed. A hot oven into

which a wicked woman had thrown a boy was made instantly cold through Jesus's magic influence. A kerchief sent by Jesus restored a dead man to life. On one occasion Jesus cursed a boy, causing his death. But, upon the protest of parents and friends, he returned his life. Other boys, too, met death through the curse of Jesus, and people who complained were often made blind. He was able miraculously to make whole broken works of art. On one occasion he quickened workmen to such an extent that they were able to accomplish twelve days' work in one.

In school, Jesus was exceptionally precocious. Although untaught, teachers stood aghast at his learning and implored his parents to take him away. One exclaimed, "I have found my master. He is either a wizard or a God." At one school, he took the book from the teacher and talked so learnedly of the law that his master "fell to the ground and adored him." When at the age of twelve he appeared before the wise men at the temple, he was asked by one concerning his knowledge of astronomy, whereupon Jesus replied by describing the motions of all the heavenly bodies and stating "their aspect, triangular, square, sextant; their course, direct, retrograde, twenty-fourth and sixtieth of twenty-fourth, and other things beyond the reach of reason." With reference to medicine, he showed wonderful knowledge of "physics, metaphysics, hyperphysics and the humours of the body, number of bones, veins, arteries, etc."

At the death of Joseph, many miracles occurred, largely through the instrumentality of Jesus. He decreed that the body should be free from decay and remain exactly as it was for a thousand years. The angels Michael and Gabriel appeared and, wrapping Joseph's soul in à shining silk napkin, took it up to heaven. He provided a miraculous shroud for the body "with no entrance or ends to the linen."

When Jesus was presented for the priesthood, Mary appeared and, in a dramatic scene, testified that he had been conceived by the Holy Ghost. Although Mary is said to have been the mother of other sons, an official examination professes to have disclosed that she was still a virgin. At his baptism, the sun manifested its favor, and all the stars and the seas smiled upon him. When Satan and his demons came against him, Jesus changed himself into a wondrous form and held Satan suspended in the sky until he begged for mercy and his forces fled in terror. Magically, Jesus caused the earth to open and threatened to seal Satan within its bowels. Time and again Jesus miraculously changes his form.

Jesus's trial and death are given in great detail. In the presence of Pilate, the Roman standard bowed before Jesus, making it impossible for twelve strong soldiers to hold it up. The beam of the cross had grown in the Garden of Eden, whence it had been transferred to Heaven and finally returned to the earth as a branch. The brazen serpent had

lived upon it, and at one time the beam had formed a part of Solomon's temple. Its wood was said to have healing powers, and some asserted that it grew from a branch of the tree of life. A cobbler, named Ahasuerus, who struck Jesus as he was bearing the cross, was doomed to remain on earth until the second coming of Christ. As often as he becomes one hundred he is set back to thirty. As he hung on the cross, Jesus had a passport written out, duly signed and sealed for the repentant thief. He also executed a will, having it witnessed by the four evangelists and signing it "Jesus of Paradise Street." The sepulcher was in the exact center of the earth and had been hollowed out of the rock from which Moses drew water in the wilderness.

The descent of Jesus into Hades is portrayed in vivid terms. Death trembles upon his throne and the cohorts of demons flee. Jesus brought light to those who had not seen its golden rays since entering the abode of darkness and gloom. Taking Adam by the hand, he led him and the saints over into Paradise. Some, however, returned to Palestine and were seen by many during the brief period between the crucifixion and the ascension. In the presence of Jesus, Satan is made to describe the nether world and to reveal the secrets of hell. Peter was permitted to see the place of torment and the frightful tortures of the damned. The punishment of each particular type of sinner is vividly portrayed. When asked to show his followers the land of the righteous, Jesus caused two men to appear of

such dazzling brightness and so celestial in appearance that no one could behold them, after which he showed them a wonderful country of light and beauty and grandeur beyond the powers of the imagination to picture and filled with birds and flowers and singing angels.

Just at dawn one Sabbath morning, forty days after the resurrection, upborne on a glorious cloud, Jesus ascended to heaven and was seen by his disciples, watching from the Mount of Olives, to sit down at the right hand of God. The search for Jesus's body proved vain and witnesses from Galilee testified of the resurrection. Two men came back from the grave to tell the story of Jesus's descent into hell, after which they returned to the nether world. Pilate is represented as writing to the Roman emperor, Tiberius, confirming the miracles of Jesus and declaring that he had accomplished more wonderful things than any credited to the Roman gods. He is made to tell of the crucifixion, the darkness that covered the earth, the earthquake shocks, the lamentation of the stars, the reappearance of Noah, Moses, Jove and many more, the wonderful light that preceded the resurrection from the tomb and other prodigies. Roman guards testify to the truth of Jesus's rising. Tiberius is reported as having proposed to the Roman senate that Jesus be deified. As he unfolded a shawl in which a portrait of Jesus had been wrapped, the emperor's flesh became as that of a little child. Titus, a Roman who expressed his indignation over the crucifixion, was instantly cured of a malignant

cancer, and all those present were cured of any ailments. At the mention of Christ's name by Cæsar, the Roman gods fell down before the senate and were changed to dust. The most direful things befell most of those who had taken part in Jesus's death.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE APOCRYPHAL MIRACLES

Although no one now believes that the Apocryphal Gospels contain anything of historical value, they do throw a flood of light upon the miracles of the New Testament Canon. They reveal the psychological state of mind of the Jewish people at the time the miracle stories originated. They disclose the insatiable appetite for the miraculous that was abroad in the land. These Gospels did not seem to be monstrous fictions to the people to whom they were addressed. They were written with the most devout purpose, and they played an important part in introducing Jesus to the world. At the time these Gospels appeared no one could foretell that they would not find a place in the sacred Canon.

By a process of natural selection, so to speak, certain writings of the time came to be regarded as sacred and inspired, while others were held to be lacking in these important characteristics. Let it be said in passing, however, that neither the writings of the New Testament nor of the Apocrypha have any inspiration, except that which naturally identifies itself with religious literature during an exceptionally active period in the spiritual evolution of the race. Let it also be noted that the deci-

sion as to what was inspired and what was not was made by ordinary human beings like ourselves. It is beyond question that none of the authors of the present New Testament Canon had the remotest notion that they were writing what several centuries later would be regarded as an important part of a divinely inspired sacred literature. That these writings are in any sense the product of a Divine Being seems wholly fallacious to any one who understands the history of their origin and development.

Most of the books of the Apocrypha are of a later origin than those in the accepted Canon of the New Testament, and yet some of them are regarded by scholars as certainly dating from the earliest period of the apostolic writings. The New Testament was several centuries in the making, and it was not finally established in its present form until 691 A. D. In speaking of this period, Conyers Middleton, an eminent theological writer of the eighteenth century, said, "There never was any period of time in all ecclesiastical history, in which so many rank heresies were publicly professed, nor in which so many spurious books were forged and published by the Christians, under the name of Christ, and the Apostles, and the Apostolic writers, as in those primitive ages. Several of these forged books are frequently cited and applied to the defense of Christianity by the most eminent fathers of the same ages, as true and genuine pieces."*

Johann von Mosheim, an ecclesiastical historian of the same period as Middleton, also said, "Not

*Quoted in Doane's *Bible Myths*, from *Free Enquiry*.

long after Christ's ascension into heaven, several histories and doctrines, full of pious frauds and fabulous wonders, were composed by persons whose intentions, perhaps, were not bad, but whose writings discovered the greatest superstition and ignorance. Nor was this all; productions appeared, which were imposed upon the world by fraudulent men as the writings of the holy apostles."

Out of this welter of pious lore, containing some historic truth and much fiction, the New Testament grew. For centuries there was no certainty as to what was to be regarded as sacred and what was not. A certain book would be accepted by one authority and rejected by another. Much that is not now included in the New Testament formed a part of the Scriptures read in the early churches. And when the sacred Canon was finally established, it proved to be a very human assembly of writings—human in authorship and human in the process of selection.

Now it may be asked, "What bearing has the process by which the New Testament came into being upon the subject of miracles?" Simply this—that there is no reason whatever for assuming the miracles of the canonized Gospels to be any more genuine than are those of the apocryphal books. They all originated in the same psychological atmosphere of pious fraud, and the decision as to which writings should be included and which rejected was entirely a matter of human fallibility. That the miracles recorded in both sets of writings were pure inventions there is no shadow of doubt.

The mere fact that a certain miracle happens to occur in a book which, through the chance of circumstances, found a place in the authorized Canon does not make it genuine. Nor does the absence of a miracle from the Canon necessarily brand it as spurious. As a matter of fact they are all spurious, for no one has ever been able to produce the smallest particle of real evidence in support of a single one of the miracles of New Testament times.

Why should any one longer practise the art of self-deception by trying to make himself believe in wondrous works that never happened? Every one knows that miracles do not happen now. The same natural laws operated in Palestine nineteen hundred years ago that operate there to-day. The discoveries of science have dissipated the psychological atmosphere of ignorance, superstition and mystery in which those pious frauds originated and thrived. That is the only difference. And after all, let us remember that the fundamental spiritual truths of the universe have no relation whatever to the occurrence of miracles. To make belief in the reality of supernatural events essential to religious faith betrays a very low order of spiritual development. If the claims to leadership of a great prophet rest upon no more sure grounds than a false belief in the occurrence of impossible events, then that leadership itself is false. But, of course, the philosophy of life embodied in the sayings attributed to Jesus has no relation to such events. Whether that philosophy was genuinely his or not, it is secure for all time.

CHAPTER VI

FROM THE APOSTOLIC AGE TO THE REFORMATION

That the supposed occurrence of miracles ceased with the close of the period covered by the New Testament writings is an entirely erroneous view. Volumes could be filled with the miraculous happenings attending the establishment of the early church and its history to the time of the Reformation. And miracles did not cease even then. Of course, it is to be understood that, as ever, it was only the belief in these fictitious events that persisted. To think in terms of miracle had become almost a disease with the common people of the Middle Ages, and with the clergy and the learned of the church this cultivation of the miraculous had degenerated into a fraud and an imposture. The mere recital of these alleged events tends to intellectual nausea. And yet they grew out of the same psychological atmosphere and were prompted by the same general motives which gave rise to the miracles of the New Testament. These miracles of medievalism are just as authentic as are those to be found in the sacred literature of olden times. The venerable mantle of antiquity lends no sanctity to the essential untrustworthiness of historic fiction, whenever and wherever it may appear. It

is most lamentable that the formulators and interpreters of religious literatures in all ages have felt that the fundamental facts of the spirituality of the universe and the divinity of man must be supported by the narration of miraculous events that never happened.

Miracles of the most marvelous character clutter the pages of church history within the period extending from the beginning of the Christian Era through the Middle Ages. Indeed this may be called the Golden Age of the Miraculous. The writings of the Fathers, particularly of the fourth and fifth centuries, teem with miracles. But the previous centuries of the Christian Era, while not so abounding in the miraculous as were the centuries that followed, were nevertheless rich in supernatural events. Of the earliest miracles of the church, Gibbon in his *Rome* speaks as follows: "During the age of Christ, of his apostles, and of their first disciples, the doctrine which they preached was confirmed by innumerable prodigies. The lame walked, the blind saw, the sick were healed, the dead were raised, demons were expelled, and the laws of nature were frequently suspended for the benefit of the church. But the sages of Greece and Rome turned aside from the awful spectacle, and, pursuing the ordinary occupations of life and study, appeared unconscious of any alterations in the moral or physical government of the world."* That is,

**Rome:* Vol. I, p. 588. (1876 Edition, 6 vols.)

the Greek and Roman contemporaries of the early church recognized these so-called miracles for their real worth—pious fabrications.

Conyers Middleton, the greatest authority upon the miracles of the early church, in speaking of the primitive Christians, said: "In the performance of their miracles, they were always charged with fraud and imposture by their adversaries. Lucian (who flourished during the second century) tells us that whenever any crafty juggler, expert in his trade, and who knew how to make a right use of things, went over to the Christians, he was sure to grow rich immediately by making a prey of their simplicity. And Celsus represents all the Christian wonder-workers as mere vagabonds and common cheats, who rambled about to play tricks at fairs and markets; not in the circles of the wiser and the better sort, for among such they never ventured to appear, but whenever they observed a set of raw young fellows, slaves or fools, there they took care to intrude themselves and to display their arts."*

And again he said: "The pretended miracles of the primitive church were all mere fictions, which the pious and zealous Fathers, partly from a weak credulity and partly from reasons of policy, believing some perhaps to be true and knowing all of them to be useful, were induced to espouse and propagate, for the support of a righteous cause."†

Against such charges, the Christian Fathers de-

**Middleton's Works,* Vol. I, p. 19.
†*Ibid.,* Vol. I, pp. 20-21.

fended themselves by declaring that in their assertions with regard to miracles they did nothing more than the pagans had always claimed to do and that it was legitimate to teach the uneducated by such means "to believe without reason." It is most significant to observe that, while the Gospel miracles themselves are outside the pale of history, those of the first centuries of the church and after are not. And we may with the utmost confidence and certainty assume that the former had their origin in the same sort of an atmosphere of fraud and imposture as did the latter. Even deliberate invention in the interest of a righteous cause was deemed in those days a worthy accomplishment. Never, within the memory of men, had the slightest obloquy attached itself to the weaving of sacred fiction or to the use of magic in the attempt to convince the ignorant of the reality of miracle. The Gospel miracles simply afforded a background for those of the early church.

Of the miracles of the first centuries, a few typical ones will serve to illustrate their character and scope. In 118 A. D., Saint Alexander, who had been thrown into prison by the Emperor Hadrian, was miraculously released from bondage by Christ in the form of a little child. Christ appeared unto the saint in his prison cell, saying, "Alexander, arise and follow me." "As the Lord liveth," replied Alexander, "I will not go with thee, except I first hear thee repeat the *Pater Noster*." Immediately, the child repeated the prayer and, taking Alexander by the hand, led him to the Roman tribune, Quirinus,

who in amazement exclaimed, "I am ready to be baptized, for none of our Roman gods can do after this sort."*

About the middle of the third century, St. Valentine restored sight to the daughter of a Roman judge, before whom he had been brought for heresy. As the saint entered the court, he prayed aloud that Christ, the true Light, would give him the wisdom to know what to say. Hearing him thus pray, the judge said, "What is that you say? How can Jesus Christ, the malefactor, be the true Light?" "He is not only the true Light," replied Valentine, "but the only Light that lighteth every one who cometh into the world." "If so," said the judge, "let me see the proof, and I will believe. I have a daughter who has been blind ever since she was two years old. If your Christ will give light to her eyes, I will believe Him to be what you say He is." The girl was brought and St. Valentine, putting his hands on her eyes, said, "O Jesus Christ, who art the true Light, give light to this Thy handmaid." Even as he spoke, the eyes of the girl were opened, and "she saw plainly."†

In the year 208 A. D., the Emperor Severus subjected Saint Andeol to the most terrible tortures because of his faith. Not subduing him on the first day, the emperor returned the martyr to prison to await further suffering on the morrow. But at midnight the Roman guards were greatly alarmed to see

*Brewer: *Dictionary of Miracles*, p. 59.
†*Ibid.*, p. 48.

the vicinity of the saint's prison cell brilliantly illuminated and to hear thousands of angel voices singing celestial music and saying, "Courage, dear brother; to-morrow thou shalt be with us in paradise." Hearing of this supernatural event, the emperor in terror beheaded Saint Andeol, lest the "magician corrupt the whole city."*

A tale of the second century, told on the highest authority as a fact, reports that a mother through mistake placed her baby in a kettle of boiling water over the fire instead of in its cradle, and rushed off to hear one of the saints preach. Upon her return home, she discovered the frightful thing she had done, but to her amazement and joy she found "the child laughing at the bubbling water, and holding out its arms to its mother." The mother attributed the miracle to the saint.†

Saint Pacomius of the third century is said to have been able to tread on serpents without injury and to crush scorpions under his feet. When he visited the monasteries of the Nile, crocodiles carried him across the rivers on their backs. He scarcely ever ate anything and never went to bed.‡

Saint Julian in the second century is credited with restoring several to life. When he went to Mans to preach, the saint found that the son of Anastasius, one of the chief citizens, had just died. Addressing Julian, the father said, "If, now, you

*Ibid., p. 10.
†Ibid., p. 122.
‡Ibid., p. 116.

could raise this lad from death, I would confess Jesus Christ, whom you preach, to be the true God, and would renounce at once the gods which I now worship." Taking the hand of the dead son in his, Saint Julian implored him who had raised Lazarus from the tomb to restore life to the young man and thereby bring about a spiritual resurrection of the multitude. Forthwith the dead one arose, to the unspeakable joy of his parents, who with many others were baptized. On one occasion, Saint Julian stopped a funeral procession and restored life to another young man.*

Many other raisings from the dead were reported of this same period, but it is significant to note that when Theophilus, Bishop of Antioch, was challenged by an eminent pagan to show him one person who had been thus raised, stating that if this could be done he would himself turn Christian, the Bishop was unable to do so.

If we now turn to the miracles of the fourth and fifth centuries and of the Middle Ages that followed we find an atmosphere dense with signs and wonders and surcharged with the supernatural. In speaking of this period, Lecky, in his *Rationalism in Europe*,† says:

"The demand for miracles was almost boundless, and the supply was equal to the demand. Men of extraordinary sanctity seemed naturally and habitually to obtain the power of performing them, and

*Ibid., p. 83.
†Vol. I, p. 157.

their lives are crowded with their achievements, which were attested by the highest sanction of the Church. Nothing could be more common than for a holy man to be lifted up from the floor in the midst of his devotions, or to be visited by the Virgin or by an angel. There was scarcely a town that could not show some relic that had cured the sick, or some image that had opened and shut its eyes, or bowed its head to an earnest worshiper. It was somewhat more extraordinary, but not in the least incredible, that the fish should have thronged to the shore to hear St. Anthony preach, or that it should be necessary to cut the hair of the crucifix at Burgos once a month, or that the Virgin of the Pillar, at Saragossa, should, at the prayer of one of her worshipers, have restored a leg that had been amputated. Men who were afflicted with apparently hopeless disease started in a moment into perfect health when brought into contact with a relic of Christ or of the Virgin. The virtue of such relics radiated in blessings all around them. Glorious visions heralded their discovery, and angels have transported them through the air. If a missionary went abroad among the heathen, supernatural signs confounded his opponents, and made the powers of darkness fly before his steps. If a Christian prince unsheathed his sword in an ecclesiastical cause, apostles had been known to combat with his army, and avenging miracles to scatter his enemies. If an unjust suspicion attached to an innocent man, he had immediately recourse to an ordeal which cleared his character

and condemned his accusers. All this was going on habitually in every part of Europe without exciting the smallest astonishment or skepticism. Those who know how thoroughly the supernatural element pervades the old lives of the saints may form some notion of the multitude of miracles that were related and generally believed, from the fact that M. Guizot has estimated the number of these lives, accumulated in the Bollandist Collection, at about twenty-five thousand. Yet this was but one department of miracles. It does not include the thousands of miraculous images and pictures that were operating throughout Christendom, and the countless apparitions and miscellaneous prodigies that were taking place in every country, and on all occasions."

In speaking of the famous attack of Conyers Middleton upon the miracles of the early church, Lecky says:

"He (Middleton) contended that the religious leaders of the fourth century had admitted, eulogised, and habitually acted upon principles that were diametrically opposed, not simply to the aspirations of a transcendent sanctity, but to the dictates of the most common honesty. He showed that they applauded falsehood, that they had practised the most wholesale forgery, that they had habitually and grossly falsified history, that they had adopted to the fullest extent the system of pious frauds, and that they continually employed them to stimulate the devotion of the people. These were the charges which he brought against men, around whose brows

the saintly aureole had sparkled for centuries with an unfading splendor; against those great Fathers who had formed the theological systems of Europe; who had been the arbitrators of so many controversies, and the objects of the homage of so many creeds. The evidence he adduced was pointed directly at the writers of the fourth century; but he carried his argument back to a still earlier period. 'When we reflect,' he says, 'on that surprising confidence and security with which the principal Fathers of this fourth century have affirmed as true what they themselves had either forged, or what they knew at least to be forged, it is natural to suspect that so bold a defiance of sacred truth could not be acquired or become general at once, but must have been carried gradually to that height by custom and the example of former times, and a long experience of what the credulity and superstition of the multitude would bear.' "*

By "the example of former times," we must infer that Middleton had direct reference to the miracle stories of the Gospel narratives. On no ground are we warranted in believing that those tales are any more authentic than the pious frauds of the succeeding centuries. Let us hope that this fact will some day stand forth in all its undisguised nakedness and that religion will forever be shorn of the miraculous.

One of the ablest and most illustrious of the Fathers of this period was St. Augustine. To him

*Quoted in Lecky's *Rationalism in Europe*, Vol. I, pp. 169-170.

more than to any other one man the church owes the framework of the whole structure of orthodox theology. He was a man of undoubted piety and sincerity of motives. And yet, within a space of two years, in his own diocese of Hippo, he enumerates no less than seventy miracles which he solemnly asserts were wrought through the influence of the body of St. Stephen. He further states that in the neighboring province of Calama, the number of miracles produced by the relic had been vastly larger, so large that volumes would be required to describe them all. In his list of miracles are five raisings from the dead. Now, what shall we say of such deliberate assertions as these? Did St. Augustine really believe that these miracles, particularly the restorations of life, actually occurred? That hardly seems credible. He did not always profess to believe in miracles for, in his treatise *On the Usefulness of Believing,* after enumerating the miracles of Jesus, he asks, "Why do not these things take place now?" and answers, "Because they would not move unless they were wonderful, and if they were customary they would not be wonderful." Just why this saintly man should have felt it necessary in his later years to lend his powerful influence in support of that which, in many instances, he must have known was not true is difficult to say. But St. Augustine was only one of scores who did the same. Evidently, these men felt that in the service of the Lord, even truth itself might be lightly held.

The following extract from St. Augustine's de-

scriptions of these miracles gives us a glimpse of what people were willing to believe in those days:

"Eucharius, a Spanish priest residing at Calama, was for a long time a sufferer from stone. By the relics of the same martyr (St. Stephen) which the bishop Possidius brought him, he was cured. Afterward the same priest, sinking under another disease, was lying dead, and already they were binding his hands. By the succor of the same martyr he was raised to life, the priest's cloak having been brought from the oratory and laid upon the corpse. . . . Audurus is the name of an estate where there is a church that contains a memorial shrine of the martyr Stephen. It happened that, as a little boy was playing in the court, the oxen drawing a wagon went out of the track and crushed him with the wheel, so that immediately he seemed at his last gasp. His mother snatched him up and laid him at the shrine, and not only did he revive but also appeared uninjured. A religious female who lived at Caspalium, a neighboring estate, when she was so ill as to be despaired of, had her dress brought to this shrine, but before it was brought back she was gone. However, her parents wrapped her corpse in the dress, and, her breath returning, she became quite well. At Hippo, a Syrian called Bassus was praying at the relics of the same martyr for his daughter, who was dangerously ill. He, too, had brought her dress with him to the shrine. But as he prayed, behold, servants ran from the house to tell him she was dead. His friends, however, in-

tercepted them and forbade them to tell him, lest he should bewail her in public. And when he returned to his house which was already ringing with the lamentations of his family, and had thrown on his daughter's body the dress he was carrying, she was restored to life. There, too, the son of a man, Irenæus, one of the tax-gatherers, took ill and died. And while his body was lying lifeless and the last rites were being prepared, amidst the weeping and mourning of all, one of the friends who were consoling the father suggested that the body should be anointed with the oil of the same martyr. It was done and he revived. Likewise, Eleusinus, a man of tribuitian rank among us, laid his infant son, who had died, on the shrine of the martyr, which is in the suburb where he lived, and, after prayer, which he poured out there with many tears, he took up his child alive.''*

The shrines of saints and their relics, of which thousands existed in every part of Europe, were among the most potent influences in working miracles all through the Middle Ages. Scarcely a hamlet in all the Continent was without some relic which had to its credit all sorts of wonderful cures, even including the raising of the dead and other supernatural events. Of all these shrines, probably that of St. Thomas of Canterbury was the most notable for the wealth of the miraculous resulting from the influence of a martyred saint. Becket had not long been dead when Benedict, his associate of

*Quoted by Warfield in *Counterfeit Miracles*, pp. 39-40.

the cathedral, announced: "Through the merits of our blessed martyr the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the poor have the Gospel preached to them. In him all the miracles of the Gospel are repeated, and find their full completion. Four times the lamps about his tomb have been kindled by invisible hands. An innocent man who was mutilated by the executioner called on the martyr for help and is restored: new eyes and new members have been granted to him. Never anywhere, so soon after death and in so brief a time, has saint been made illustrious by so many and so mighty tokens of God's favor."*

Froude, in his *Life and Times of Thomas Becket,* says, "Miracles come when they are needed. They come not of fraud, but they come of an impassioned credulity which creates what it is determined to find. Given an enthusiastic desire that God should miraculously manifest Himself, the religious imagination is never long at a loss for facts to prove that He has done so; and in proportion to the magnitude of the interests at stake is the scale of the miraculous interposition. In the eyes of Europe, the cause in which Becket fell was the cause of sacerdotalism as against the prosaic virtues of justice and common sense. Every superstitious mind in Christendom was at work immediately, generating supernatural evidence which should be universal and overwhelming. When once the impression was started that

*Froude: *Life and Times of Thomas Becket,* p. 116.

Becket's relics were working miracles, it spread like an epidemic. Either the laws of nature were suspended, or for the four years that followed his death the power and the wish were gone to distinguish truth from falsehood. The most ordinary events were transfigured. That version of any story was held to be the truest which gave most honor to the martyr. That was the falsest which seemed to detract from his glory.'"*

Between deliberate fraud, decried by Froude as an explanation of this orgy of miracle-working, and a credulity which courts a belief in falsehood, there is little to choose. The people about this shrine had gone miracle-mad, as did those about every other such shrine during that fitful period of spiritual evolution.

The miracles began on the very night following Becket's murder. His body had been placed in front of the high altar. Benedict, the monk, was the first to report a supernatural manifestation. In the words of Froude, "Asleep or awake—he was unable to say which—Benedict conceived that he saw the archbishop going towards the altar in his robes, as if to say mass. He approached him trembling. 'My lord,' he supposed himself to have said, 'are you not dead?' The archbishop answered, 'I was dead, but I have arisen again.' 'If you are risen, and, as we believe, a martyr,' Benedict said, 'will you not manifest yourself to the world?' The archbishop showed Benedict a lantern with a candle dimly burning in

*Ibid., pp. 116-117.

it. 'I bear a light,' he said, 'but a cloud at present conceals it.' He then seemed to ascend the altar steps. The monks in the choir began the introit. The archbishop took the word from them, and in a rich, full voice poured out, 'Arise, why sleepest thou, O Lord? Arise, and cast us not forth forever.' "*

Thus we see the easy facility with which a dream was instantly translated into the reality of a miracle.

Froude continues, "The word went round the dormitory that the archbishop had risen from the dead and had appeared to Benedict. The monks, scarcely knowing whether they too were awake or entranced, flitted into the cathedral to gaze on the mysterious form before the altar. In the dim winter dawn they imagined they saw the dead man's arm raised as if to bless them. The candles had burnt out. Some one placed new candles in the sockets and lighted them. Those who did not know whose hand had done it concluded it was an angel's. Contradiction was unheard or unbelieved; at such a moment incredulity was impious. Rumors flew abroad that miracles had already begun, and when the cathedral doors were opened the townspeople flocked in to adore. They rushed to the scene of the murder. They dipped their handkerchiefs in the sacred stream which lay moist upon the stones. A woman whose sight had been weak from some long disease touched her eyes with the blood, and cried

*Froude: *Life and Times of Thomas Becket*, pp. 117-118.

aloud that she could again see clearly. Along with the tale of the crime there spread into the country, gathering volume as it rolled, the story of the wonders which had begun; and every pious heart which had beat for the archbishop when he was alive was set bounding with delighted enthusiasm. A lady in Sussex heard of the miracle with the woman. Her sight, too, was failing. *Divinitus inspirata,* under a divine inspiration, which anticipated the judgment of the Church, she prayed to the blessed martyr St. Thomas, and was instantly restored. Two days later a man at Canterbury who was actually blind recovered his sight. . . . In the outside world there were those who said that the miracles were delusion or enchantment; but with the scoffs came tales of the retribution which instantly overtook the scoffers. A priest at Nantes was heard to say that if strange things happened at Canterbury the cause could not be the merits of the archbishop, for God would not work miracles for a traitor. As 'the man of Belia' uttered his blasphemies his eyes dropped from their sockets, and he fell to the ground foaming at the mouth. His companions carried him into a church, replaced the eyeballs, and sprinkled them with holy water, and prayed to St. Thomas for pardon. St. Thomas was slowly appeased, and the priest recovered, to be a sadder and a wiser man.''*

Among the sacred relics of the martyr placed before the marble sarcophagus containing his remains, was the hair underclothing he had worn, said

Ibid., 118-119.

to have been swarming with vermin. About the tomb was built a wall with openings through which "the sick and the maimed, who now came in daily crowds for the martyr's help, could gaze and be healed." Constant streams of pilgrims came to Canterbury, and soon all Europe was in a turmoil as to which locality could relate the most prodigious miracles that had been wrought by the direct intervention of the saint or by calling upon his name. The blood of the martyr came to be in universal demand. Its curative properties were marvelously potent. The limited quantity at first presented a difficulty, but the problem soon solved itself. A miraculous fountain mysteriously broke forth in the crypt of the tomb, and with the perpetual flow of water was mingled the blood of the martyr. Pilgrims for a price carried it away in small containers. Froude says, "No diamond mine ever brought more wealth to its owners than St. Thomas's water brought to the monks of Canterbury."*

On one occasion a man who had committed a felony was given to the knife. His eyes were torn from their sockets and he was wounded to the point of death. A neighbor, however, cared for him, and his wounds slowly began to heal. On the tenth night St. Thomas appeared to him, promising that, should the poor man present himself the next day with a candle at the altar of a certain church and not doubt in his heart that God was able and willing to cure him, his eyes would be restored. He did so, and in

*Ibid., p. 123.

the empty sockets eyes about the size of those of a bird appeared, with which he could see perfectly. Some apparently doubted this story, for we read of two almost identical miracles performed upon others soon after, each related with much show of circumstantial evidence and proof. In fact, a committee of monks had early been appointed to verify to the utmost each miracle reported. Many thousands of miracles were thus substantiated. At this sacred shrine, although the martyred saint had led a profligate life, leprosy was cured, amputated limbs were restored, a boy seven days dead was brought to life, and a butchered cow, whose hide had already been sent to the tannery, was returned whole to the owners. A prisoner's chains were miraculously loosed by a draught of Canterbury water. Scores of dead animals were restored to life. In particular, persons who had been drowned were resuscitated. Canterbury water was changed to milk. A starling seized by a kite invoked St. Thomas and was immediately released. A miracle, still commemorated in the stained glass of the Canterbury Cathedral, represents the resurrection of a boy, two days dead of the plague. In life, St. Thomas himself, while dining with the Pope, is credited with having "changed water into wine."*

And so the miracle stories continue. Many pages might be filled in relating just a few of the vast number. And this was but one of hundreds of such shrines throughout Europe where similar events

Ibid., Ch. XI.

were of daily occurrence. They simply illustrate the height of absurdity to which the prodigious credulity of people in an age of ignorance and superstition will carry the imagination.

The monarchs of Europe were everywhere credited with innumerable miracles. Hundreds were said to have been performed by Henry VI of England. At the invocation of the blessed king, a child of four, drowned in a mill-stream, was restored to life. This event is fully "attested" by many eye-witnesses. As an innocent man, taken with a robber, was being hanged at Cambridge, he called upon the dead king to save him just as the noose was beginning to tighten about his neck. Immediately, the king appeared, supporting the victim with his hands, vindicating the innocence of the man and saving him from a cruel death. The record states that "the case was investigated at Hammersmith and verified." A recently published book, entitled *Miracles of King Henry VI,* describes one hundred and seventy-four miraculous events.

Thousands of isolated miracles of every description, taken from this wonder-period of racial evolution, might be cited. It is recorded of St. Catherine that, because of the great spiritual fire that burned within her, water in a silver dish into which she dipped her hands to cool them was made to boil and the dish itself became greatly heated. In the fifteenth century, King Ferdinand I of Naples sent an officer and forty soldiers to arrest St. Francis of Paula. But the officer was so awed in the presence

of the saint that he fell at his feet in worship. The good man then set before them two small loaves and a pint of wine, at the same time blessing the food and drink. All ate and drank to entire satisfaction, and when the feast was over more was left than when it began.* A saint who had retired to the desert to lead a life of seclusion was fed by birds, who daily brought a sufficient supply of food. When he was joined by a second saint, the supply was miraculously doubled. At his death, two lions appeared to dig his grave and give burial, uttering over the body a long howl of mourning and kneeling before the survivor to receive a blessing.† St. Polycarp is said to have withstood the flames when the attempt was made by the governor of Smyrna to burn him at the stake. The mass of combustibles "being set alight, blazed up with great fury, but instead of attacking the body of the saint, formed a canopy 'like the sails of a ship inflated by the wind.' There stood the aged disciple of St. John in his canopy of fire, bright as silver purified in a furnace, while from his body there issued a fragrance sweeter than incense. The executioners, greatly exasperated at this spectacle, pierced him with spears, and the blood which spouted from the wounds of the martyr quenched the fire in which he stood."‡ When St. Valery of Luxeul was at Gamaches, a nobleman named Sigobard had just condemned a

*Brewer: *Dictionary of Miracles*, p. 146.
†Lecky: *Rationalism in Europe*, p. 156.
‡Brewer: *Dictionary of Miracles*, p. 139.

man to death, and the sentence was immediately executed. St. Valery saw the man suspended by the cord, and hastened to the gallows. The executioners drove him back but, paying no attention to them, he cut the man down, and laying himself on the body, face to face, and hand to hand, he prayed God to restore the man to life. His prayer was heard; the man revived, and stood on his feet full of strength and vitality. St. Valery now supplicated Sigobard to let the man go; but he refused, and ordered the fellow to be hanged again. Valery expostulated and said, 'You have already punished him with death for his offenses, and can not in justice punish him twice for the same crimes. God has given him a new life, and in this new life he is yet innocent.' Sigobard, seeing the force of the appeal, set the man free, and he lived many years. A chapel stands on the spot where this occurred.''*

To add to this list would only prove wearisome. Miracles without number, ascribed to Christians, heretics and heathens alike, intermingle in one grand welter of intellectual hysteria. Although St. Augustine was accustomed to deny the miracles of the heretics outright, he conceded the genuineness of those of the heathens, but regarded them as holding the same relation to his own as did the wonders of Pharaoh's magicians to the miracles of Moses. When an eminent divine of the church, otherwise distinguished for his great mental vigor, solemnly asserts that a certain drug introduced by innkeepers

*Ibid., pp. 85-86.

into cheese changes travelers into domestic animals, and people unhestitatingly believe such tales, we need not marvel at the wealth of the miraculous which fills the pages of ecclesiastical history over a period of sixteen centuries.

As illustrating the way in which many of these miracle legends originated, the case of St. Francis Xavier is significant. Quoting from my *Through Science to God,** "Xavier was a Spanish nobleman of the sixteenth century, who embraced the plans of Ignatius Loyola, the founder of the Society of Jesus, and became a missionary of vast influence in the Far East, dying in 1552 on the desert island of San Chan. Now it is a most significant circumstance that, although Xavier himself has left in his own writings a detailed record of his many years of missionary work, we find in them no event which could possibly be interpreted as a miracle. He made no claim to miraculous power, and none of his brother missionaries in their numerous letters, written and published during Xavier's lifetime and still in existence, make any mention of miracles. Yet his biographies are full of alleged supernatural events wrought by him, and the further away we get from the time in which he lived the more luxuriant is this legendary growth. Although Xavier himself has told us with what difficulty he mastered the Japanese language, he is credited with the 'gift of tongues,' even speaking with such fluency from the very first that the natives thought him one of their own race.

*Pp. 219-220.

In these imaginative writings, scores of miracles stand to the credit of St. Francis. He is said to have raised the dead, to have restored sight to the blind, to have caused an earthquake to punish a blasphemous town, to have made sea water fresh by the sign of the cross, to have been lifted bodily from the earth and transfigured before the multitude, and to have called down fire from heaven to destroy a wicked village. Most singular of all, on one of his voyages he caused a crab to restore a crucifix which had been lost overboard. On the basis of ten such miracles, selected from the long list of pious stories invented by his industrious admirers, Xavier was canonized in 1622 by Pope Gregory XV."

We wonder now how it was possible for such hosts of pure inventions and deliberate falsehoods to obtain currency. The answer is simply that people had an inordinate fondness for the supernatural and were willing and eager to believe any extravagant tale without examination. Miracles had always happened, and there seemed to be no reason why they should ever cease. The great discoveries of science, which have shattered for all time faith in the possibility of miracles, had not come. Until the close of the Middle Ages this was still a lawless world. There was nothing improbable about a miracle. A miracle was simply a time-honored and well established method whereby God had in all times spoken unto men. Happenings which now admit of the most ordinary explanations were in that simple-minded age of ignorance supernatural events. That

no one ever had actual first-hand knowledge of any person who had been raised from the dead, for instance, did not deter any one from believing with the utmost certainty that many such raisings had taken place. People simply believed what they wished to believe and what they had been brought up to believe. There is nothing whatever more mysterious about the belief in the current miracles of that time than there is now, even among educated people, regarding belief in the miracles of the Old and New Testaments. Orthodox people everywhere, from childhood up, have been taught these miracles and their reality is seldom questioned. Because they are in the Bible they are true. That is the attitude of hundreds of people. They do not know that the Bible is very much of a human document. That the miracles themselves are utterly improbable and wholly unsupported by historical evidence carries no weight. Ancient religion without miracles would be no religion at all. To rob the Bible of miracles would be to take God out of it. That is the view of the Fundamentalists.

With the coming of Roger Bacon, Galileo, Kepler, Newton, Columbus, and Magellan, and their great scientific discoveries, belief in contemporary miracles had to go. Soon doubt was cast upon any of the miracles of the Christian Era, and the boundary line of the miraculous was pushed backward to the New Testament times. Why the improbability of the miracles of sacred literature should not have been just as apparent, it is difficult to say. Doubt-

less, owing to the false conception of what constitutes true religion, it was felt that without miracles the basis of Christianity would be gone. The time had not yet come to speak the truth regarding the pious fabrications of an earlier age. Even now one who indulgently smiles upon the simple-mindedness which would give credence to a genuine miracle today, vigorously defends these impossible events when seen through the sacred mists of nineteen hundred years of religious mysticism. People in all ages have believed what they wished to believe.

All, except Catholics, concede that the miracles of the early church and the Middle Ages are utterly false. Those of the Bible are no less so.

CHAPTER VII

MIRACLES OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

The Church of Rome is still a medieval institution. The superstitions which flourished so luxuriantly in the Middle Ages even yet obscure its vision and muddy its thought. Not only does it cling to all of the miracles of sacred literature and the early church, but it points to a mass of supernatural events, wrought in our own time, as marvelous as those of any former period of the church's history. All the excess baggage of an earlier age has been carried forward into the present. Indeed, this supposed manifestation of the supernatural is one of the proudest boasts of the Catholic Church. It holds it to be a supreme mark of Divine favor.

Of course, until the time of the Reformation the Catholic Church as a separate institution did not exist. Christendom was not then officially divided into two great camps. Both the Protestants and the Catholics alike were heirs to the miracles of the early centuries and of the Middle Ages. In time, Protestantism repudiated these, pushing backward the most recent boundary line of the miraculous to the Apostolic Age, but Catholicism did not.

Let it be noted again that belief in miracles did not originate with the Christian Church. It was a

legacy from the ancient past and from the heathen worship of contemporary religions. The early Christians were simply baptized heathens. These heathens could not forget their former beliefs and practises. Instead, they made them a part of their new faith. He that was superstitious remained superstitious still. A heathen atmosphere heavy with miracle penetrated every part of the new organization. Miracle faith was the biggest factor in heathen religion. As Trede says, "The power which in the Roman Empire set the state religion going, as well as the numerous local, social, and family cults, was belief in miracles. The gods, conceived as protecting beings, as undoubted powers in the world, but as easily offended, were, by the honor brought to them in their worship, to be made and kept disposed to interpose in the course of nature for the benefit of their worshipers, in protecting, helping, succoring, rescuing them; that is to say were to work miracles. Belief in miracles was involved in belief in the gods; only denial of the gods could produce denial of miracles."* And again, "In the third century religious belief was steeped in belief in miracles. In their thinking and in their believing men floated in a world of miracles like a fish in water. The more miraculous a story the more readily it found believing acceptance. There was no question of criticism, however timid; the credulity of even educated people reached an unheard of measure, as

*_Wunderglaube im Heidentum und in der alten Kirche_, p. 101. Quoted by Warfield in _Counterfeit Miracles_, p. 75.

well as the number of those who, as deceived or deceivers, no longer knew how to distinguish between truth and falsehood. Those of the old faith (the heathen) had no doubt of the miracles of the new faith (the Christians), and *vice versa*. The whole population of the Roman Empire was caught in a gigantic net of superstition, the product of the combined work of East and West. There never was a society so enlightened and so *blasé* that lived so entirely in the world of the supernatural.'"* Such was the inheritance, both of Protestantism and Catholicism from the early centuries.

Even to-day the Catholic Church points to these early miracles as proof of the occurrence of supernatural events. Such pious fabrications as those of St. Augustine are regarded as of the utmost significance. Catholic leaders seem to be utterly oblivious to the fact that this good Father, declared by Harnack to be unquestionably the greatest man produced by the Christian Church "between Paul the Apostle and Luther the Reformer," was color-blind, so to speak when it came to miracles. "As a child" of his times, he could not break the bonds that fettered him to a superstitious age. But that is no reason why the Catholic Church to-day should remain fettered by the same bonds.

One most miraculous occurrence related by St. Augustine has been traced to a legendary source. He tells of a countryman who, through mistake on

*Ibid., 56-57; *Counterfeit Miracles*, 75-76.

the part of the powers that be in the other world, was summoned by death. Upon arriving before them, he was informed of the mistake and that another man had been intended. Immediately he was restored to life, and in that very moment the real victim died. St. Augustine tells us that he knew this man and at the following Easter baptized him. Now this same miracle is also related by Gregory the Great as happening to a friend of his, from whom he had it directly as a personal narrative. But two hundred and fifty years before the time of Augustine and three hundred and fifty before Gregory, a heathen writer named Lucian had told a precisely similar story as a satire on the superstitions of his age. Now there is one telltale circumstance in all three of these narratives. In St. Augustine's story, it was a certain "Curma" who first died and "Curma the smith" who should have died. In Gregory's, the respective names were "Stephen" and "Stephen the smith," while in Lucian's concededly fictitious tale, it was "Demylus the smith" who should have been summoned.* These coincidences simply illustrate the prolific way in which heathen legends materalized into Christian miracles. And again why should the Catholic Encyclopedia to-day point to St. Augustine's list of miracles, of which the foregoing is a sample, as trustworthy evidence of the supernatural?

It is equally pertinent to ask why Protestants should regard the miracles of Scripture, drawn as

*Warfield: *Counterfeit Miracles*, Lecture II.

they were from the same heathen sources, as any more authentic than are those related by St. Augustine.

There is one type of miracle peculiar to Christianity. It has no counterpart in heathenism. It was invented by the medieval church, and belief in it is still retained by the Church of Rome. It is the miracle of stigmatization. It refers to marks believed to have been supernaturally impressed upon the bodies of chosen persons in imitation of the wounds upon the crucified body of Christ. The first such miracle is related of St. Francis of Assisi, who died in the thirteenth century. A certain colleague, named Brother Elias, wrote a letter in which he described the stigmata as follows: "And now I tell you a great joy and an unprecedented miracle. Since the world began no such sign has been heard of, except in the case of the Son of God who is Christ our God. Not long before his death, our Brother and Father appeared as one crucified, bearing in his body five wounds which were in truth the marks of Christ. For his hands and feet looked as though they had been pierced through on both sides with holes made by nails, still showing the scars, and the black mark of the nails; whilst his side looked as though it had been pierced, and frequently emitted blood."*

This story came to be much elaborated by Elias's successors. Blood actually flowed from the saint's side on numerous occasions, and it was asserted that

*J. M. Thompson: *New Testament Miracles, (appendix).*

not only the nail-holes, but the nails themselves made out of the saint's own flesh, had been perceived.

Since St. Francis's time many other instances of stigmatization have been reported. One authority* has noted three hundred and twenty-one cases, twenty-nine of which occurred in the Catholic Church of the nineteenth century. Sixty-two of these have received official recognition in the form of canonization or beatification. That there is anything of the supernatural to be associated with these alleged markings is, of course, outside the pale of probability.

The most prolific source of miracles in the Catholic church is to be identified with the superstitious veneration of relics. This form of worship had its origin in heathenism, but it was much elaborated by the Christians and the Church of Rome. Indeed, this homage paid to relics obtained from the bodies of dead saints is on no higher plane than the worship accorded by the heathen to graven images. One is just as worthy of reverence as the other. Both are crystallizations of ignorance and superstition. The heathen, too, venerated the relics of their heroes, just as Catholics do those of their saints. The heathen, however, have one thing to their credit. They never commercialized their superstition by resorting to an unholy traffic in these imaginary fulcrums of supernatural aid. As regards the efficacy of this form of heathenism, it is most significant to note

*A. Imbert-Gourbeyre: *Les Stigmatisées, Louise Lateau,* etc.

that it makes no difference whether a relic is false or genuine. One produces just as good results as the other. To assume that there can be any virtue in a relic from a dead man's anatomy, however good he may have been, is to betray a state of mental development akin to that of the most benighted of past ages. And yet that very faith is and always has been a badge of distinction among vast numbers of the adherents of the Catholic faith.

Many absurdities* have appeared among these collections of relics. For instance, we learn that the early Christians preserved feathers dropped from the wings of the angel Gabriel when he came to announce to Mary the birth of Jesus. Pilgrim monks returning from Jerusalem boasted that they had seen the finger of the Holy Ghost. In the church of Saints Cosmas and Damien at Rome is to be seen a "vial of the milk of the Blessed Virgin Mary." Several other churches in Rome as well as churches in France and Spain also exhibit specimens of this milk. Even the statues and paintings of the Virgin are said to have, on occasion, supplied milk for these purposes. Indeed, it is asserted that Mary has appeared unto holy men especially worthy of her favor and restored them to health by supplying milk from her breast. Günter says, "In the Mary-legend, the Virgin also had to become a miraculous nourisher, and that—in accordance with the exaggerated imagination of the times—with her own milk. A monk gets sick; mouth and throat are so

*See Lecture II, Warfield's *Counterfeit Miracles.*

swollen that he can take no nourishment; the brethren expect the end. Then Mary appears—visible only to the sick man—and gives him her breast and announces to him his early recovery.''* But this is aside from the subject of relics.

To a very large degree the spirit of Catholicism centers about the relic-chest and the miracles supposed to be wrought by the direct intervention of God in behalf of those who venerate these magic tokens of a saintly life. The altar of a church, it is said, has become but the ''coffin enclosing the bones of a saint.'' For many years it has been the rule that the altar shall contain a relic. The table for the mass is also but ''a chest which guards the precious relics of a saint.'' These relics are regarded as the vehicles of a supernatural power of which the worshipers may avail themselves.

Among the most celebrated of these relic shrines is that in honor of St. Anne de Beaupré, at Beaupré, Canada.† The chapel was founded in 1658. On the very day of dedication the patron saint showed her favor by healing of rheumatism a man who was in the act of depositing three stones in the foundation of the edifice. From that day to this a continuous stream of miracles has manifested the divine favor. It is said that huge pyramids of crutches, walking sticks, bandages and other appliances may be seen on either side of the main entrance, left by those who, having prayed to the saint, have gone away cured.

**Legenden-Studien*, p. 165.
†Catholic Encyclopedia.

In later years the gift of a wrist bone of the revered saint constitutes the magic symbol of divine aid. Of these cures, more later.

As evidence of the miraculous, the liquefaction of the blood* of the saints is a widespread belief in Catholic circles. In the Church of the Holy Apostles in Rome one may see the perpetually liquid blood of St. James the Less and the blood of St. Nicholas of Tolentino. At the nunnery of St. Cyriacus, where the saint's head is kept, it is said that on each anniversary of the martyr's death, which occurred in 1241, this relic becomes red with blood. Annually, at Naples, on the day of St. Janarius's festival, the liquefaction of the saint's blood is exhibited. Apparently the depths of human credulity have not yet been plumbed.

In recent times another aspect of the Catholic faith in miracles has come to the fore. Important as relics still are in the Roman ritual, they are being crowded into the background somewhat by the worship of the Virgin Mary. Particularly is this true in France, said to be the "land of Mary as Italy is the land of the saints." Apparitions of the Virgin† occurring there on three historic occasions have resulted in the inauguration of new cults and the establishment of sacred shrines, visited by vast numbers of pilgrims and blessed with many wonderful miracles. In 1846, at La Salette, the Virgin is

*Warfield: *Counterfeit Miracles,* p. 97.

†Warfield: *Counterfeit Miracles,* Lecture II; John Oxenham: *The Wonder of Lourdes.*

said to have appeared to two shepherd children, a boy and a girl, aged respectively eleven and fifteen. "As a girl in white, no bigger than me," she appeared at Lourdes in 1858 to an untutored peasant girl of fourteen. And in 1876, at Pellevoisin, as the "Mother All-Merciful," she appeared to a serving maid.

The statement of Andrew D. White regarding one of these apparitions is significant. Of the shrine at La Salette, he says it "preserves its healing powers in spite of the fact that the miracle which gave rise to them has twice been pronounced fraudulent by the French Courts."* At that time it was asserted that "the beautiful lady" who appeared to the children was a young woman named Lamerlière.

Of these three shrines, that at Lourdes is the most renowned. The alleged apparitions of 1858 appeared to Bernadette Soubirous, a girl who has been described as a defective, born of very ordinary parents, and who grew into a very diseased woman. At the time of the appearances she could neither read nor write nor speak the French language. Feeble in constitution, dull of brain, afflicted with asthma, unintelligent and commonplace—it seems quite extraordinary that this type of a girl should become the central figure of such a remarkable experience. Eighteen apparitions of the Virgin, it is claimed, were vouchsafed to this ignorant maid. At

Warfare of Science with Theology, Vol. II, note pp. 21-22.

each of them, the girl's face was transfigured with a heavenly light. Observers who had come to scoff reverently kneeled in prayer at the sight. Her face, radiant with a "light that never was on land or sea," shone like that of an angel. On one occasion, the "Lady" bade the child to scrape the earth with her hand. She did so, and a fountain of water immediately gushed forth and has continued to flow from that day to this. That was the beginning of the famous Spring of the Grotte—the water of Lourdes—which supplies the baths and which is carried in bottles to every part of the world. About this sacred spring great temples of faith have arisen for the healing of the sick and the regeneration of the fallen.

In the first half century of the shrine's ministry, it is estimated that ten million pilgrims visited it. Out of this number, there were about four thousand recorded healings, and it is believed that there were as many more unreported. Of the pilgrims who are sick, only a very small proportion actually receive benefit. Although the water of the baths becomes exceedingly filthy at times from the large numbers of diseased persons who are immersed in it, it is asserted that no one has ever been infected by exposure to the myriads of germs which must lurk there.

That there are "cures" at Lourdes is beyond question. But that there is nothing miraculous about them is equally certain. We will not, however, trespass upon the subject of the next chapter

by discussing this controversial matter at this point. Just now the miracle-faith of the Catholic hosts focuses upon Lourdes. That is the secret of the shrine's so-called miraculous power—unfaltering faith in its ability to regenerate. Take away that faith, and the healing forces latent within the physical being of an individual will cease to be invoked, with the consequent decay of the miraculous potency of this far-famed shrine and the eclipse of its popularity. There is nothing unique about Lourdes. Its cures follow the beaten path of precedent. That they are due to any special manifestation of Divine favor is but a dream of an over-credulous faith.

Another miracle still held by the Catholic Church is that of transubstantiation, or the mystic change of the bread and wine of the Lord's Supper into the real body and blood of Christ. That the sacrament of the Lord's Supper was a pagan rite* adopted by the Christians, there is no question. It originated several centuries before the time of Jesus. Cicero, who was born in the year 106 B. C., refers to this custom, saying, "How can a man be so stupid as to imagine that which he eats to be a God?"† The followers of the Grand Lama in Thibet and Tartary offer a sacrament of bread and wine to their god. The ancient Egyptians annually celebrated the resurrection of their savior Osiris with a similar ceremony. The Essenes, predecessors of the Christians,

*Doane: *Bible Myths*, Ch. XXX.
†Doane: *Bible Myths*, p. 305.

had this rite. So did Pythagoras and his followers of the fifth and sixth centuries B. C. The nearest approach to the sacrament of the Christians is to be found in the ancient religion of Persia as a ceremony observed by the adherents of the savior Mithra. The mystical wine and bread were employed in the "Mysteries" of the savior Adonis. And there were other examples of this custom. Among the Protestants, belief in the miracle of the transubstantiation of the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ has disappeared, but it is still retained by Catholics.

In speaking of the heathen origin of many Christian rites, Draper in his *Science and Religion* says, "The apotheosis of the old Roman times was replaced by canonization; tutelary saints succeeded to local mythological divinities. Then came the mystery of transubstantiation, or the conversion of bread and wine by the priest into the flesh and blood of Christ. As centuries passed, the paganization became more and more complete."*

In the Catholic Church, belief in miracles still reigns supreme. The very atmosphere of paganism, in which miracles originated and flourished, pervades its sanctuaries. Faith in the supernatural is stronger than respect for the truth of science. But as for this, Catholicism is no different from Protestant Fundamentalism, except that the latter does not attach much importance to present-day miracles. It may be centuries hence—yet the time

*Quoted in *Bible Myths.*

will come when belief in miracles in the minds of all intelligent people will be as much of an absurdity as the belief in fairies and witches is to-day. We may be perfectly sure, however, that Catholics and Fundamentalists alike will oppose this conquest of truth and reason as long as opposition is possible.

There is a long, long way to be traveled yet before the majesty of truth may claim its throne. But the dead hand of the past can not always fetter the living present.

"Truth crushed to earth shall rise again;
The eternal years of God are hers;
But Error wounded writhes in pain,
And dies among his worshipers."

CHAPTER VIII

MIRACLES OF HEALING

No other class of miracles has occupied so large a place in the history of religions or numbers so many notable instances of triumph as do the miracles of healing. They have occurred always and everywhere, under the most diverse conditions and in response to all manner of stimuli. To tell the complete story of mystic healing would be to review the whole range of world history from earliest times to the present. Interwoven with superstition, always the product of an unfaltering faith, often associated with fraud and imposture—this restoration of the afflicted to health of body and peace of soul fills a large chapter in the experiences of mankind. But that there is or ever was anything supernatural about this work of healing is one of the widespread delusions of the human race. To illustrate this fundamental fact, let us review briefly some of the outstanding examples of healing, and more particularly those of comparatively recent times. The facts brought out, however, will have a very direct bearing upon the healing miracles of Bible times and those of the centuries that followed.

Miracles of healing are not peculiar to the followers of any sect or creed. They began in pagan-

ism centuries before the beginning of Christianity. From the temples of the ancients to the relics of the Middle Ages and the shrines of modern pilgrimage stretches a long pathway of "supernatural" healing. And healings, quite as remarkable as any others, have occurred without any expression of religious faith whatever. There has always been faith, deep abiding faith, but often it has not been the faith of religious zeal. Many times, too, those whose faith has been unquestioned have failed to be cured. Only a small percentage of those who in all ages have visited temples and shrines in search of health have come away benefited. And this gives rise to the suspicion that certain types of individuals are susceptible to the mysticism of healing influences while others are immune.

Let us begin with reference once more to the healing miracles wrought by the veneration of relics. These symbols of a heathen fetish worship abounded in every cathedral, every abbey and almost every parish church during the Middle Ages. Indeed, they are to be found there to this day. They were all sources of vast numbers of healings. Their value was immense for, as a result of their commercial exploitation at the hands of popes, priests and lay dignitaries, they brought enormous revenues into the coffers of the church. All large cities of that period invested considerable sums in the purchase of relics and reaped large returns in consequence. The Abbey of Soissons grew wealthy from the body of St. Sebastian. At the Cologne Cathedral since

the twelfth century were to be seen the reputed skulls of the Wise Men, who, guided by the Star of Bethlehem, came to worship Jesus. Believing these relics to be genuine, afflicted people in large numbers flocked to this shrine, and many were healed. Incidentally, the church fattened off this form of imposture, and the false belief in miracles, thus fostered, continued to flourish. A cemetery at the church of St. Gereon was dug up and its disinterred bones disposed of as the relics of the good saint and his band of martyrs. Needless to say, these relics were very efficacious in performing healing miracles. The walls of the church of St. Ursula were covered with the bones of a nearby cemetery and represented as being those of the saint and her following of eleven thousand virgin martyrs. The fact that anatomists have declared many of them to be the bones of *men* seems to have had no untoward influence upon their healing virtues. Neither did the discovery that the relics of St. Rosalia at Palmero were the bones of a goat and not those of a human being. Their miraculous powers continued unabated. Even popes, for a consideration, entered into the manufacture and sale of consecrated symbols of fetish worship. Thus sanctioned by the church, this form of idolatry flourished and grew strong.

The important fact to observe is that as a result of this Christianized heathenism very many "cures" were wrought. These were heralded far and near and are even looked upon by Catholics to

this day as miracles. To one, however, who understands their history, there is nothing miraculous about them. They simply represent the power of a great faith working upon the minds and bodies of certain susceptible subjects, and this being so obviously true, may we not inquire whether or not all such cures may not be of the same nature, even including those reported of Jesus?

Incidentally, this widespread belief in miracle cures, retarded for centuries the progress of modern medicine and surgery. When people believed that water in which a saint's ring had been dipped would cure fevers, or water with which a single hair of his head had come in contact was an excellent purgative, or wine in which his bones had been thrust would cure lunacy, or that rubbing with a dead saint's tooth would stop toothache, and when the clergy everywhere emphasized the miraculous potency of these heathen practises, is there any wonder that people were slow in realizing the importance of the science of medicine? When men actually believed that a dead man was brought to life by coming in contact with the bones of Elisha, why should they not believe that the afflicted one who touches the bones of the Wise Men at Cologne would be restored to health? If Naaman was cured of leprosy by bathing in the Jordan, why should not men again be made whole by dipping in sacred pools, consecrated by modern saints? If people believed that the seamless coat of Jesus and his winding sheet were still preserved, why should they not

have faith that contact with these garments would make well the sick, even as the supposed garments of St. Paul had done? That the French courts have twice declared that the origin of one sacred shrine was "tainted with fraud" and it has been shown that the angel voices consecrating another were mysteriously conveyed through a hole in the wall seems not to have shattered the faith of people in these meccas of miraculous healing. But that there is anything of the supernatural about them is a belief born of easy credulity and gross ignorance.

Another form of miraculous healing, fostered largely by the Protestant Church, consisted in a widespread belief in the efficacy of the royal touch. Epilepsy and scrofula were particularly amenable to this method of treatment. However profligate the royal personage might be, his sacred touch was a no less potent means of divine healing. Henry VIII, Elizabeth, Charles II, James II, William III and Queen Anne of England and Louis XIV of France, besides others of the royal line, whether Protestant or Catholic, made innumerable cures. It is estimated that Charles II, shameless debauchee and cynical reprobate, touched one hundred thousand persons. Sergeant-Surgeon Wiseman, in speaking of the cures effected, said: "I myself have been frequent witness to many hundreds of cures performed by his Majesty's touch alone without any assistance of chirurgery, and these many of them had tyred out the endeavours of able chirurgeons before they came thither." The Church of England recognized

this form of healing. The reality of the cures was attested by a multitude of eminent scholars, divines and doctors of medicine. That cures were effected, there can be no question. People had absolute faith in the healing virtue of the divine touch, and those of a certain type proceeded to get well in large numbers. That God chose to act in a miraculous way through these scions of a royal ancestry, many of them dissolute scapegraces, is a wholly ludicrous assumption. But if these cures were the result of bringing into operation certain psychological and physical laws, why are not all such cures to be attributed to the same cause? Although the monarchs frequently had no faith themselves in the beneficent influence of their touch, this made no difference with its healing potency. Does any one believe that God acts in a miraculous way through a faithless individual? And yet, despite exaggeration and falsehood, many of these cures were just as genuine as those attributed in any age to any instrument of divine favor. If faith healing is ever miraculous, it must always be so. If it seems certain, as it does, that in large numbers of instances this kind of healing has nothing whatever of the miraculous about it, then we may be reasonably, if not perfectly, certain that it is never due to divine intervention.

Let us turn now to more recent times, for the last three centuries, including the present, have been no less prolific in the abundance of supernatural cures than have those of any other age. Belief in supernaturalism, particularly in the mat-

ter of healing, seems to be a disease from which humanity, both afflicted and whole, is utterly unable to shake itself free. First we shall consider a few of the outstanding examples of the band of personal healers, who from Mesmer to Mrs. Eddy and Coué have numbered their adherents by the thousands.

The forerunner of Mesmer was Professor Maximilian Hell, astronomer at the University of Vienna. One day it occurred to him that the application of a magnet to the muscles of a rheumatic fellow-worker might have a beneficial effect. He explained to the afflicted man that magnetism is similar to nervous force and that this mysterious form of energy ought to have a curative influence upon human ailments. From the very beginning, the patient was relieved and in a few weeks he had been entirely cured. Other patients came, and soon the benevolent professor was doing a wonderful business. Not only were people cured of rheumatism. All sorts of diseases yielded to the magic influence of magnetism. And yet, as is well known to physicians and scientists, magnetism has no effect whatever upon the human tissues. Deep faith in the efficacy of the new form of treatment was the only essential. Of any of these cures, one might have said with perfect propriety, "Thy faith hath made thee whole."

Professor Hell never laid any claim to divine intervention in making these cures, but an imitator of his did. Pfarrer Gassner, a clergyman in the little village of Elwangen in South Germany, pro-

cured a set of magnets and proceeded to make large numbers of cures among his parishioners and those who came to him from far and near. But before he would apply the magnets, he required a patient to make his peace with God. Gassner soon discovered that nothing else was required. The magnets were entirely useless. Therefore, he instituted an early form of Christian Science and was gaining a large following when the church authorities interfered with an order that he cease activities. These two sets of experiments make very clear one outstanding fact—a profound faith in the power of some healing agency will arouse into activity physical forces, latent within the human mechanism, which effect a cure. And it makes no difference whether this faith be faith in a divine agency or in some purely mechanical device or process.

At the time Professor Hell was performing his wonderful cures, Franz Antoine Mesmer was a student at the university. Realizing that the newly discovered force of electricity was a much more potent symbol with which to work upon the popular imagination, Mesmer devised what he called a "baquet" or battery. Wires leading from the battery were placed in contact with the patients. Through them health-giving energy was supposed to flow to the diseased parts. Soon this master healer was curing hundreds of patients every week and thousands were flocking to him for his miraculous assistance. Although there were doubtless many lapses, people were really cured. And these cures were not simply

upon the common people. The educated and the well-to-do were cured with equal facility. Paris went wild over Mesmer. Of course, he charged large fees and reaped a substantial reward for his ingenuity. He was offered a pension of twenty thousand livres by the king if he would give his secret to the public, but this Mesmer declined. The Government then appointed a commission of eminent scientists, including Lavoisier and Benjamin Franklin, to investigate the famous "cure." They reported that there was absolutely nothing physical in the form of treatment and that the electric fluid was imperceptible by any of the senses. It was simply a faith cure, and the Government refused to allow Mesmer to continue his work.

The whole significance of this episode lies in the fact that here was a man who made no pretense to a divine mission and yet cured scores of people of long-standing ailments. It should be recalled, too, that Mesmer worked during the period of the French Revolution when the over-wrought nerves of the people made them highly susceptible to the influences of suggestion. All that Mesmer did was to change one's attitude of mind toward himself and his physical troubles. He did exactly what every other such healer, before and since, has done, with the result that all who were not afflicted with incurable organic diseases proceeded to get better, often to be cured. No one claims there was anything miraculous about Mesmer's cures, yet they were as "miraculous" as any others that have ever occurred.

Just at the close of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the next came one of the most interesting chapters in the long history of faith-healing. Doctor Elisha Perkins of Connecticut, a man of great physique and strong personality, invented what he called a "pair of tractors." They consisted of two short metal rods, made by fusing together a number of different metals. When these rods were placed in contact with each other and rubbed downward over the portion of the patient's body suffering from any disease, very beneficial effects followed. The metals were supposed to generate powerful currents of electricity, which did the healing work. Doctor Perkins gave these to the clergy and sold them to professional men and the general public at very substantial prices. At once, people responded nobly, becoming expeditiously cured of all manner of physical troubles. Despite the fact that scientists ridiculed the new discovery and brother physicians declared Doctor Perkins' tractors to be without any physical effect whatever, people persisted in being cured. They enjoyed a great vogue in a number of European countries, particularly among the educated and royal classes. Perkins' son estimated that a million and a half cures were effected in England alone. Clergymen, physicians, professors and public men of eminence bore testimony to the genuineness of many cures. It was even asserted that cures were effected on animals, particularly horses and dogs. Everything continued to go beautifully until certain English phy-

sicians discovered that tractors made of wood but painted in imitation of metal produced just as good results as did those supplied by Perkins. With the wood, of course, there could be no delusion as to the presence of electric currents. When this fact became generally known, faith in "tractorism" was shattered. No longer could Perkins induce the public to be cured. After Perkins' death, his biographer, still dumfounded at the whole episode, asks, "Is it within the bounds of probability that the vast amount of authenticated evidence which was produced in favor of tractors and their marvelous power to heal the ills of mankind should be resolved into a delusion, a mere phantom of the imagination?" Yet such seems to be the case.

About the middle of the last century, Andrew Jackson Davis of Poughkeepsie, New York, sometimes called the "Seer of Poughkeepsie," announced that he had been the recipient of a revelation of divine healing. While in a country churchyard in the spring of 1844, Davis avers that he fell into a trance and was visited by the spirits of Galen and Swedenborg. Galen, Greek physician of the first century, and Swedenborg, Swedish mystic of a much later time, instructed him in the methods and mysteries of curing disease. Under the spell of this heaven-sent healer of human ills, disease disappeared as by magic. He was supposed to have celestial wisdom. People only needed to talk with this man of God to become immediately better. Under his direction, the simplest remedies became marvel-

ous wonder-workers. Davis soon became a national institution. He was even invited to address the United States Senate. A book written by him became a best seller, enjoying as great a prestige as Mrs. Eddy's book has in our generation. To say that Davis reaped a golden harvest is to put it mildly. Stimulated by his example and his large measure of financial reward, other divine healers entered the field, and many effected cures. The multitude of misunderstood, chronic invalids, who always feel that they need something new and different in the way of cures, had real faith in these self-confessed emissaries of divinity and, as is always the case, proceeded to get well. The whole movement was imposture from the very beginning to the end, and yet healing "miracles" just as genuine as those credited to any religious prophet flowed from it in abundance. It simply affords another sidelight on the psychology of miracles and cures.

Another of the bright constellations in the firmament of mystical healing was Doctor Phineas Quimby, of Portland, Maine. His name is still more illustrious from the fact that he was the real originator of New Thought and Christian Science. He made the discovery of the tremendous influence which the mind exerts upon the mechanism of the human body. At first he believed himself to be the possessor of supernatural powers of healing. He treated his patients by the laying on of hands, imagining that a current of magnetic energy flowed into the patient through one hand and that the ills of

the sufferer flowed out through the other. After a time, however, he discovered that the laying on of hands was wholly unnecessary. He could cure his patients equally as well simply by persuading them that there is no such thing in the world as evil. Human ills were all due to entertaining thoughts of evil. When men ceased this destructive activity and became convinced that only good permeates the universe, these self-imposed ailments of mankind automatically disappeared. He followed lines of healing precisely similar to those laid down by Gassner in the previous century. Quimby argued that the God-given health forces of life and vitality are all about us but that sick people drive them away through their doubts and dreads and thoughts of fear. With the elimination of these, health returns and physical suffering flees. It was simply the spirit of optimism crystallized in a practical way. And, since a large proportion of the ills of mankind are psychological, Quimby was highly successful. Cures in abundance resulted from his new philosophy, and the New Thought movement to which it gave rise has been a boon to a host of people.

It was to Doctor Quimby that Mrs. Eddy journeyed for treatment for what doctors had diagnosed as "spinal nervousness," resulting from a fall. After several treatments, she felt herself cured, and so profound an impression did Doctor Quimby's philosophy of disease make upon her that she adopted it, working his ideas over into the cult of Christian Science. With her fundamental ideas, the

world is well acquainted: "Mind is all and matter naught." "Man is never sick; for mind is not sick; and matter can not be. False belief is both the tempter and the tempted, the sin and the sinner, the disease and its cure." "The cure of disease is effected by making the disease appear to be—what it really is—an illusion." "Matter is a fiction." "Bones are only an appearance; bones are a subjective state of mortal mind; bones have only the substantiality of thought."

For hundreds of sufferers, whose ills are due to a state of nerves or psychological causes, Mrs. Eddy's treatment is precisely what is needed. Above all else, neurotic patients need to free their minds of any thought of disease. When this has been done, Nature proceeds to effect a cure. Faith in the reality of health and the illusiveness of pain and suffering restores normal functions and stimulates into action physical forces latent within the human organism. There is nothing miraculous about such cures. They are in no sense due to divine intervention. This idea of the non-existence of matter was not new with Mrs. Eddy. It was advanced by Greek philosophers before the Christian Era, and it has been a part of other systems of thought from that time to this. Eddyism is simply another form of faith cure. In one guise or another, it is as old as the human race. No one questions the reality of the cures effected by it. One must simply recognize that Christian Science has its limitations. It can not set a broken bone nor eradicate a

deep-seated organic malady. For instance, no genuine case of cancer has ever been thought out of existence. Neither can thought stay the hardening of the arteries. It can not eliminate Bright's disease nor annihilate the ravages of tuberculosis. Of course, Christian Science can do a good deal to relieve the symptoms, even of organic disease, and it can always be a tremendous ally of good health and long life. But it is sheer folly to assume that any system of faith cure is in itself an all-sufficient answer to human ills. What Christian Science follower would have sufficient faith to permit himself to be bitten by a yellow fever mosquito or a mad dog and then trust to mere thought to enable him to escape the grip of death? It is all very well to talk about the non-existence of matter, but matter in the form of a deadly poison like prussic acid becomes a very real and tangible thing, whose consequences no amount or quality of thought can destroy. Christian Science is both a blessing and a menace—a blessing when employed to treat patients suffering from psychological causes, a menace when applied to cases of bacteria infection or the functional disturbance of vital organs.

So far as the purposes of this discussion are concerned it is important to note that the cures of Christian Science have no relation whatever to faith in a Divine Being. They are no whit more remarkable than those which have been wrought through pure faith in exclusively materialistic agencies, as for instance the cures effected by Doctor Perkins'

tractors. If they were really due to divine intervention, there would be no limit to the nature of the diseases amenable to Christian Science treatment. Cancer, typhoid fever and pneumonia would yield to its influence just as readily as do cases of neurosis, psychological rheumatism and nervous breakdown. No bounds could be set to the healing achievements of the God of all creation. That he enters into these cures in any special way is a delusion—perfectly harmless and even beneficial, but nevertheless a delusion. These cures are in no sense modern miracles.

In our list of self-styled divine healers of human ills, we must not fail to include Alexander Dowie. Claiming to be Elijah returned to earth, Dowie declared it to be his mission to heal mankind before the second coming of Christ. Even in this twentieth century of enlightenment, he soon had an immense following, numbering his adherents quite as largely from the educated and wealthy classes as from the poor and ignorant. He claimed to have cured two hundred thousand people simply by touching them. That he did effect many cures, there can be no doubt. Many chronic invalids need just this sort of a mental shock to stimulate into action those slumbering physical forces necessary to inaugurate any cure. Deep abiding faith arouses the inherent power of regeneration. It is the same old story, exemplified over and over throughout the long and wearisome history of so-called miracles of healing.

To illustrate how susceptible people are to such

an influence, let us consider the meteoric career of a rival of Dowie, named Schlatter. This self-designated divine personage spent forty days in fasting on the mountain of the Holy Cross in Colorado and then, uncouth and wild in aspect, he descended into Denver and announced that he was prepared to heal mankind. And mankind responded readily to his call. Under the spell of his divine presence, canes and crutches were no longer necessary, chronic aches and pains dropped from human frames as if by magic and disabilities of long standing vanished as the mist before the sun. When he appeared upon the streets, crowds followed him. Some who no more than touched "the hem of his garment" declared themselves to have been healed. No healer of ancient times ever met with greater success than did this impostor. He continued to reap a rich harvest until the United States postal authorities prosecuted him for fraudulent use of the mails, in sending out handkerchiefs which he had consecrated to the cure of disease. And yet, Schlatter worked "miracles" of healing just as genuine as those in any other age of human frailty.

The spectacular healing career of Monsieur Coué, the French druggist of Nancy, is so recent in the public mind that it is unnecessary to rehearse it here. It is refreshing, however, to find the apostle of a new health fad who made no claim to supernatural powers. This earnest benefactor of suffering mortals with his famous "every day in every way I am getting better and better" simply

discovered one more way of rallying through the power of thought the latent physical forces which make for human resistance and recuperation. As he said, he simply taught patients to cure themselves. There is no pretense of anything miraculous about his method. But cures just as striking as those of any predecessor have followed in abundance. If one can successfully put across the suggestion of perfect health and unbounded faith in its realization, Nature will come to the rescue and effect a cure.

Let us return once more to the miracles at Lourdes. If ever the stage was set for the successful working of the power of suggestion, it is at this famous shrine. The patient, living possibly in some distant hamlet of France, hears of the wonderful cures being wrought. He inquires of friends, and mayhap of his physician. All urge him to go. Still he is long in making up his mind. A difficult journey is no light undertaking for an invalid. Often his financial resources are exceedingly limited. At length the pilgrimage begins. He arrives in a state of physical and nervous exhaustion and in a mental condition highly susceptible to suggestion. The one idea of being cured dominates the invalid's mind to the exclusion of every other. Waiting for his receptive mental state is the dramatic machinery of the elaborate system at the shrine itself. The vast concourse of people, the pitiful procession of the sick, the singing multitude, the auspices of sacred ritual, the consecrated water

of the baths, the wave after wave of impassioned supplications to Father, Son and Mary, the hosannas crashing again and again like the peals of heavy artillery, and finally from thousands of throats the joyful shout "A miracle! A miracle!"—all combine to create an atmosphere tense with the presence of the supernatural.

Swept along on such a tremendous flood-tide of mental influences, the patient feels surging within him that irresistible faith in some regenerating power within or without, he knows not where, which, if his condition is at all susceptible, effects a cure. But even at Lourdes only a very small percentage of those who come seeking health find it. They whose physical condition and mental states are such as to predispose them to cure are healed. Others are not. There is nothing more miraculous about the cures at Lourdes than there is about those from any other agency down through the ages. Much as one might wish to believe in a special manifestation of divine aid, the history of healing utterly precludes it. Lourdes is a good talking point for those who wish to foster faith in supernatural cures, but its influence is destined to disappear just as that of every other such shrine has ultimately done. When the public faith is shattered, as shattered it some day will be, miracles there will automatically cease. And this will be due, not to the withdrawal of divine favor, but to the decadence of human faith.

In this review of faith healing might be mentioned the numerous cures to the credit of the hosts

of drugs which have been perpetrated upon humankind without the possibility in themselves of any curative effect. And then there are the healing springs and mineral baths, mechanical appliances and mystic devices, spiritualistic frauds and hypnotic states, besides the many fetish agencies growing directly out of human credulity and superstition. But in every instance they appeal to the faith of the patient in something above and beyond himself to effect a cure. And this faith arouses the immanent, God-given forces latent within his own physical being, waiting always to regenerate the organism, when once their marvelous potency has been invoked.

Adherents of some healing agency or shrine often point to the discarded canes and crutches of restored sufferers as indisputable evidence of some marvelous supernatural presence. But it is a notorious fact that once a person becomes addicted to the use of these artificial aids he clings to them long after their real necessity has passed. He simply thinks that he can not do without them. He needs some psychological shock to dislodge from his mind this false belief in the need of artificial support. Sometimes such an invalid rises from his bed in the presence of fire or some other calamity and, forgetting for the moment his pet disability, discovers to his later joy that he has been a slave to crutch or cane. The faith in his own independence, engendered in the presence of some shrine or healer, supplies just the stimulus needed to restore the use

of limbs, kept in a state of "paralysis" through the destructive power of thought.

It has always been the typical neurotics (people suffering from nervous disorders), the hysterics and those afflicted with the mental aberration of physical disability who have afforded the subjects for the hosts of cures wrought in all ages by healers and at sacred shrines and relics. Such patients are able to simulate nearly every disease to which humankind is heir. All of the characteristic symptoms become manifest and to all appearances the patient is a genuine sufferer. But his trouble is in reality a self-imposed one of his own mental creation. He is a glorious subject for any sort of a healing agency. When the proper stimulus arrives, he automatically proceeds to become cured. It is not meant to infer that the patient does not believe himself to be a real victim of disease. As a matter of fact, however, the chief trouble is in his mind. When this difficulty is removed, he immediately becomes well. These are the sort of patients that Christian Science and other healing agencies can cure with the utmost facility, and to them they largely owe their following.

Now as to the application of all this. There is nothing miraculous or supernatural about the healings of any age or agency. Miracles of healing are no evidence whatever of a divine mission. Because the writers of the Gospel narratives, however, believed they were and because their ignorant and superstitious predecessors in former ages had

thought this must be true, they attributed to Jesus many miracles of healing. The nature of many of them has demonstrated their utter unreliability. Jesus may quite likely have effected cures similar to those of other healers before and since. But no one whose optic nerve was actually paralyzed has ever been restored to sight. No leper has been magically made whole. No one whose vital organs have ceased to function has been raised to life. Likewise the vast numbers of similar miracles credited to the saints and their relics down through the ages are all spurious. There is not a genuine one among them. Cures identical with those described in the foregoing pages there were in abundance. But, as we have seen, these were not true miracles. The history of these so-called miracles of healing is saturated with a wealth of self-deception, pious fraud and deliberate fabrication. It constitutes a most astounding record of the prodigious lengths to which man's insatiable credulity and superstition will carry him. Belief in such supernatural events is a hall-mark of racial infantilism. Let us hope that the time is near at hand when men will have outgrown this transient state of intellectual immaturity.

CHAPTER IX

MIRACLES AND SCIENCE

A NUMBER of years ago, when Madame Curie was in this country, it was my pleasure to meet this most distinguished of women scientists, and shortly after, in company with a group of chemists and physicists, to visit Memorial Hospital in New York, where is kept the largest quantity of radium to be found in any hospital in the world. There, in a glass flask inside a steel safe, surrounded with thick concrete walls, are four grams of a radium compound used in the treatment of cancer. Every morning at nine o'clock, the members of the staff having charge of this work pump off from the radium what is known as the radium emanation, a glowing gas, and it is this gas whose healing rays have a curative effect on cancerous tissue.

Our group appeared at the hospital by appointment at the forementioned hour. We were ushered into a small room containing an imposing array of apparatus. The room was darkened, and the attendants set the apparatus in motion. Presently we saw the glowing gas begin to appear in a small capillary tube about forty centimeters long. Certain chemicals when exposed to these rays would themselves acquire this property of luminosity and con-

tinue to fluoresce, or glow, when taken into another darkened room. The tube into which the radium emanation had been pumped was then sealed off and divided into a large number of short capsules to be inserted directly into the diseased tissues.

One of the most interesting properties associated with this phenomenon of radioactivity is the fact that the process of pumping off the emanation may be continued indefinitely. The life history of this extraordinary element is seventeen hundred and thirty years, which means that in this period half of any given quantity of radium will decay, or disintegrate, in seventeen hundred and thirty years more half of the remainder, and so on.

But, as I stood there, I knew that I was in the presence of the most remarkable manifestation of energy that the world has ever seen. Silhouetted against the background of the ages, I saw the dream of the alchemist come true, and in prophetic vision I beheld the possible coming of a new era in human affairs of such dizzy vastness as to dwarf into insignificance all the proudest achievements of preceding ages. For under my very eyes I beheld the transmutation of the metals, the achievement for which the alchemist sought through so many centuries, and, in this natural liberation of energy, I saw a possible key to the tapping of those immeasurably vast reservoirs of subatomic energy locked up within the atoms of the elements in such infinite quantity. I knew that, should man, as he may at any time, attain to the *controlled* liberation of this energy, he would

stand at a turning-point in the evolution of the race comparable to that of the caveman when he had gained the mastery of fire. I knew that no longer should we need to fear a coal strike or the possible exhaustion of any of the present sources of energy and power. Sir Oliver Lodge has calculated that the energy imprisoned within the atoms of an ounce of water would lift the German ships sunk at Scapa Flow and place them high and dry on the mainland. The late Robert Kennedy Duncan rather extravagantly asserted that the energy in a breath of air would run the workshops of the world. And then again, I knew that this new knowledge of radioactivity had ushered us into the very anteroom of the molecular mysteries, and that it had given us a wonderful glimpse into that marvelous edifice, the atom with its planetary systems of revolving electrons.

And, as I reflected upon all this, it occurred to me that up until quite recent times this dance of the electrons would have been an inexplicable mystery—a veritable miracle. Even to most of us it seems like a miracle. Did we not know that the scientist in his laboratory understands this new fact of radioactivity and is even able to interpret it in terms of rigid mathematics, it would be as much a miracle to us as to the veriest savage. For after all, despite our boasted learning and our veneer of education, in much of our thought we still think in the crude terms of primitive men. Like the vestigial relics of our physical anatomy, we still possess in our mental framework the savage's insatiable curiosity, his

credulity, his superstition, and that delightful proneness to wonder which in all ages has led him to invent fairy tales and myths and legends and miracles.

Let us glance at that unscientific world of yesterday and discover if possible in what sort of a universe those early peoples lived. Primitive man found himself surrounded with a Nature that was sometimes genial and kind, but often cruel and ruthless. Why did the tempest sweep away his rude home? Why did he frequently die in vast numbers from famine and pestilence? Why must he suffer from the terrible cold of Arctic climes and from the intense heat of tropic suns? Why did the drought often destroy his means of sustenance? Why did the wild beasts seek his life? The only cause of which he had any experience was that of will power—a personal agency. And so, in his attempt to adjust himself to his environment, he peopled all Nature with deities and spirits and witches. He personified the springs and brooks, the trees and flowers, the rocks and the heavens. The sun was a mighty archer, the clouds huge birds and the tempest a voracious dragon. To him this was a capricious world. It was a lawless world. Anything might happen. In such an atmosphere miracles had to occur. Natural phenomena which now admit of the simplest explanations were then marvelous wonders. The thunder was the voice of God expressing his wrath at a sinful world. Flashes of lightning were tongues of hell fire. Comets were

prodigies of evil spirits, portending ruin to the earth and its inhabitants. The rainbow was God's sign in the heavens. Disease was the result of demons. Everywhere, witches stalked abroad in the land. People lived in a state of luminous surprise and constant expectancy. Miracles were the perfectly logical outcome of the universe as so constituted. No natural laws were violated, because none had been established.

From this blissful dream of a miraculous world, or shall we call it a hideous nightmare of awful uncertainty, men were destined to receive a rude awakening. One evening in 1610, Galileo swept the heavens with his telescope and the celestial spheres of the imaginative theologians of the early church came crashing to the earth, past the possibility of reconstruction. To his amazement, he found that he could count ten times as many stars as were visible with the unaided eye. He turned his "Optic Tube" upon the beautiful Milky Way, and that band of hazy light, the star-dust of the ancients, was resolved into millions of faint stars, at vast distances from each other, and yet so exceedingly remote from the earth that they appear like snowflakes in a blinding storm. The moon, under his keen gaze, became scarred with rugged mountain ranges and pitted with volcanic craters. The sun disclosed spots upon its theretofore unblemished surface. One evening this uncanny scientist of the Paduan hills brought the planet Jupiter within the range of his magic revealer of ages-old secrets. As he watched this

member of our solar family night after night, he beheld four tiny bodies revolving about the central mass. Here, indeed, was a miniature solar system. The Copernican theory of the heavens seemed in this discovery to find direct confirmation. When continued observations showed that Venus passed through phases similar to our moon, the revolution of this planet about the sun was established, and the view of Copernicus had won a sweeping victory. Great days were those in the conquest of truth. From night to night, men grew in mental and moral stature. A new heavens and a new universe were finding their places in the thoughts of men. Of course there was tremendous opposition to the acceptance of this revolutionizing conception of the celestial bodies and their movements, but that is another story.

Four centuries before, Roger Bacon had taken the miracle out of the rainbow. Already, Columbus had discovered a new continent by sailing westward upon the "Great Waters," and Magellan had circumnavigated the globe. Kepler followed Galileo with his discovery of the laws of planetary motion. Then came Sir Isaac Newton with the majestic conquest of the universal Law of Gravitation. Under the influence of its far-reaching sway, he brought the movements of the comets and in so doing took the first step toward dispelling the superstition associated with those erratic members of our solar family. Franklin flew his kite and forever robbed the lightning and the thunder of their mystery and

their terror. The beginnings of modern medicine and surgery slowly put the witches and the demons to flight. Large areas of the universe were redeemed from capricious influence. The superstitious science of alchemy vanished before the discoveries of the new chemistry. Astrology gave way to astronomy. The new force of electricity set men atingle with a tense expectancy for marvelous revelations of the unseen. Vast realms of unexplored truth beckoned on every hand. The epoch-making discoveries of Priestley, Scheele, Cavendish, Lavoisier, Davy, Faraday and a host of others literally created a new world. They substituted fact for fancy and dependability for a reign of capricious influence. In such a heyday of scientific triumph, miracle-faith had to go. It vanished like the mist before the rising sun. But marvelous as it seems, the majority of people then could not see that miracles were just as impossible in Bible times as they had become in the modern world. Orthodox people to-day are equally blind.

Along a thousand pathways of scientific investigation, the searchers after the hidden mysteries of the universe have for three hundred years been justifying the supreme faith of the human spirit in the uniformity of nature and the perfect working of natural laws. Men have come to know that this is a rational universe, a dependable universe, a universe that is amenable to our human understanding. It always acts in the same way. Given in the laboratory or elsewhere a particular set of conditions, and the result is always precisely the same. There

is never the slightest variation or "shadow of turning." And so men have learned to have faith in the integrity of the universe. They know that miracles do not happen now, and they are just as certain that they never have happened. They regard the occurrence of a miracle as a direct violation of the Divine Order—an impossibility in a rational world.

Let us define a miracle. From the standpoint of science, a miracle is the occurrence of a natural event without a perfectly definite set of preceding factors which determine to the minutest detail just what that event is to be. There is no chance anywhere. If a certain result is known, the factors producing it are ascertainable; if the factors are known, the result is predictable with the utmost certainty. That is the teaching of experimental science, and to this invariable rule there has never been known to be an exception. Men believe that there never has been an exception. If one were to toss a coin into the air, it might seem to be a mere matter of chance as to how it would fall. But, if the force with which the coin was thrown, its mass, the exact pull of gravity, the resistance of the air and every other possible influence were known with exactness, the path of motion could be predicted with as much precision as is that of a heavenly body.

Theoretically, of course, a miracle is possible. If we like, we may assume that a miracle is the product of a natural law with a single event to its credit. Practically, however, we know of no such instance. Had Jesus actually changed water into wine, that

would constitute a case in point. It would have meant an alchemistic transformation totally at variance with all present knowledge of chemistry. Water consists of molecules of hydrogen and oxygen, while wine is an aggregation of much more complex molecules of hydrogen, oxygen and carbon. Manifestly, water can not be changed into a compound whose molecules contain atoms of an element not found in its own molecules. Of course, it is true that the chemist has discovered that electrons constitute the common stuff out of which the atoms of all elements are composed. It is conceivable that some of the atoms of hydrogen and oxygen might have been decomposed and their constituent electrons reassembled, so that carbon should have been a product and wine the final outcome. But the transformation, on the scale indicated in the Bible, would have required inconceivably vast quantities of energy, to say nothing of accomplishing in a totally unscientific age a feat which is hardly yet a dream of chemistry. We must conclude that this as well as all other similar alleged events contrary to the known laws of nature never happened. If this changing of water into wine had been accomplished once, it could be accomplished again. It would have been in accord with some natural law, and natural laws never cease to operate. Only they who are essentially ignorant of what is involved glibly talk of the possibility of miracles. No, miracle, the "dearest child of faith," while theoretically possible, is utterly improbable in a practical world.

Natural law, as the scientist understands it, and miracle are forever in conflict. One is the complete antithesis of the other. They can not exist side by side in the same world. An overwhelming abundance of evidence of the most trustworthy character attests the everlasting truth of natural law. But there is not a single instance of an authenticated miracle on record. No one who thinks clearly can believe in the occurrence of miracles and preserve his intellectual integrity.

SOME "MIRACLES" OF SCIENCE

It is perfectly permissible to use the term "miracle" in a figurative sense, meaning thereby the marvelous achievements of science, real triumphs infinitely more impressive than the imaginary occurrence of impossible events whose only purpose was to awe the multitude. In the one case the accomplishment has been wrought by working in perfect harmony with natural laws and has resulted in a distinct advance in human knowledge, while in the other the wondrous event occurred in utter defiance of all precedent and, had it actually happened, would have spelled a chaos instead of a world of law and order. It is interesting to observe that one of the strongest arguments of orthodox believers for the existence of God is this very fact of a world of law and order and the contention that such a world could not have come about from mere chance. They completely forget, however, that the belief in miracles knocks that argument into the proverbial

"cocked hat." Miracle is the direct opposite of order and could occur only in a lawless world. But with this figurative interpretation of miracle in mind let us proceed to a consideration of some of those outstanding achievements of science which have confirmed beyond the possibility of refutation our faith in the integrity of the universe and our conviction that the lawless signs and wonders of superstitious ages occurred only in the imaginations of ignorant peoples.

Probably the most noteworthy example of implicit faith in a universe of perfect law is to be found in the discovery of the planet Neptune. The next preceding planet to become a member of the solar family was Uranus, discovered by Sir William Herschel in the year 1781. But, much to the perplexity of the astronomers, Uranus did not follow the precise path marked out for it in accordance with the law of gravitation. These deviations were susceptible of just two explanations. Either the law of gravitation was not altogether true, or there was some unknown attracting body exerting an influence upon Uranus. In the early forties of the last century two astronomers, Leverrier in France and Adams in England, undertook, independently of each other, to calculate on the basis of the law of gravitation the exact mass and position of a theretofore unknown body which would produce precisely the observed irregularities in the path of Uranus. The two men completed their calculations at about the same time, each arriving at the same result, and

Leverrier sent word to the Royal Observatory in Berlin that, if its telescope were to be pointed to a certain portion of the heavens, a new planet would be discovered. This was done, and behold, there was the planet just as foretold. It was named Neptune and took its place as the eighth member of our planetary group. No greater faith in the integrity of the universe has ever been displayed.

In 1867, Sir Norman Lockyer with the aid of the spectroscope, that marvelous instrument for revealing the secrets of the heavens, discovered the gas helium in prodigious quantities in the atmosphere of the sun. He predicted then that this gas would sometime be found on the earth. A generation later, Sir William Ramsay, true to the prediction, found it issuing from certain minerals and as one of the rare elements of the air. I once heard Sir William give a series of lectures upon this remarkable piece of research and as I listened I felt that I was beholding the fulfilment of prophecy as much as though I had witnessed the calamities which befell ancient Israel as a result of the iniquities denounced by the prophets of old. Once more the uniformity of Nature had been demonstrated.

About this same time, Mendeléeff, greatest of Russian chemists, worked out the Periodic Law of the elements, establishing certain fundamental relationships between the properties of an element and its atomic weight. In the beautiful language of Robert Kennedy Duncan, "Just as the pendulum returns again in its swing, just as the moon returns

in its orbit, just as the advancing year ever brings the rose of spring, so do the properties of the elements periodically recur as the weights of the atoms rise." On the basis of that law, Mendeléeff predicted the discovery of three elements, and the kindness of fate bestowed upon him the privilege of living to see his prophecy fulfilled. Not only did the new elements take their respective places in the periodic table exactly in accordance with their atomic weights, but their properties proved to be as Mendeléeff had foretold. The thought of a great thinker had found its counterpart in the realities of the universe.

When toward the close of the last century the new knowledge of radioactivity was beginning to intoxicate the imagination of scientist and layman alike, Madame Curie applied for and received permission to investigate radioactive substances in general. Her work soon proved that pitchblende, the parent mineral from which uranium, the first of the radioactive elements, was obtained, possesses a radioactivity four times greater than does uranium itself. To her keen mind this fact could mean but one thing—pitchblende contained some unknown element of vastly greater radioactive power than any thus far observed. Having supreme faith in the trustworthiness of Nature, she began the most prodigious piece of research to be found in the history of chemistry. As all the world now knows, she discovered radium, more than a million times as radioactive as uranium, and the key to a greater

knowledge of the underlying mysteries of energy and matter than has been afforded by any other discovery of science. Had this been a capricious universe of miracle and chance, devoid of that dependability arising from the perfect working of natural law, Madame Curie could have had no certainty that her work would be crowned with success. As it is, we have one more monument testifying to the scientist's faith in the absolute reliability of these clues to Nature's secrets.

I sometimes wander into Faneuil Hall, where I soon find myself in spirit transported backward to the atmosphere of colonial New England. As I gaze upon the numerous portraits of the Fathers of the Republic ranged along the walls, I try to imagine with what feelings of awe and infinite wonder these men of an earlier age would behold the modern world in which we live. It would surely be a world of miracle, and yet in perfect accordance with the eternal working of natural law. All these marvels of science were latent possibilities in their time, and even from the foundation of the world. But to these men they would be inexplicable mysteries, far more wonderful than any imaginary miracle of ancient times. In very truth, fact would be stranger than fiction. Were they to be left to their own explanations of things as they found them, they would be as helpless as was the savage in the presence of the starry heavens. Were their ignorant guesses to prevail, once more miracle would reign supreme, and man would become again the creature of fate.

Had you been in the Massachusetts General Hospital on October 16, 1846, you might have heard a young man exclaim, "I have felt no pain." For the first time in history, ether had been used as an anesthetic in a major surgical operation. Those who had come to scoff, as though they had been invited to witness something as impossible as the raising of the dead, beheld this miracle of science in awe and silent admiration. More wonderful than any fictitious "sign" of old was this stilling of tortured nerves. With such a victory written large in every hospital in the world, why should we ever waste time upon the consideration of supernatural events, unworthy of intellectual respect?

Let us go to a little home-laboratory in England. It is the time of the Easter vacation of the year 1856. Just at dusk of an apparently unsuccessful day's work, we see a seventeen-year old lad, later Sir William Perkin, pick up a flask half full of a sticky mess of chemicals. His first impulse is to throw the stuff away. Then, as though restrained by the hand of destiny, he pauses. Picking up a bottle of alcohol, he fills the flask and, behold, there flashes into view a beautiful purple dyestuff. The transformation seems as magical as the changing of water into wine. We have witnessed the birth of mauve, the first of the analine colors. Standing there in the twilight, could he have unveiled the future, young Perkin would have beheld emerging from the black, foul-smelling coal tar with which he was working, the most delicate perfumes known to

Nature, the explosive that wounds the soldier and the balm that heals, dyes of every shade and hue, powerful drugs for the stilling of pain and the allaying of fever, antiseptics, preservatives, photographic chemicals, a sweet five hundred times sweeter than sugar—all these and much more. No more miraculous treasure-house of chemical wealth has ever been found. Yet in more than half a century of exploration of a new domain, not the shadow of a deviation from the established laws of chemical behavior has been observed.

Though it be a myth, we like to stand in imagination beside the fireplace in that Scottish home on the River Clyde and observe the boy Watt as he ponders over the expansive force of steam. Again years later we see him in his little shop at the University of Edinburgh busily engaged on the reconstruction of the Newcomen steam engine. Slowly yet surely, as though guided by an unseen power, he brings to realization the vision of a wonderful achievement for his fellowmen. At length, he attains the first goal in his bold attempt to shackle the giant steam and harness him for the performance of the world's work. Imperfect though his device is, it points the way to the lifting of human burdens and the inauguration of a new industrial age. No miracle has been wrought. Man has simply learned to use one of Nature's most powerful forces.

Let us go to the Supreme Court Room in the Capitol at Washington. It is May 24, 1844. Seated at a table, we see Samuel F. B. Morse, and before

him stands a group of eminent men. Morse operates a clumsy device, and there flashes over America's first telegraph wire that immortal message "What hath God wrought." To some of those present a miracle may seem to have been accomplished. And yet only a new force has been utilized for the benefit of men. The first step has been taken in the annihilation of space and time. But no law has been broken. Nothing has been done which can not be repeated time and again by any one who duplicates the conditions. Everything is in perfect harmony with the established order of the universe. Morse simply tuned in on the secrets of Nature and made a wonderful discovery for the advancement of civilization.

Again, let us visit the Centennial Exposition at Philadelphia in 1876. It is just dusk of a hot July afternoon, and we find ourselves in an out-of-the-way corner of the Educational Building. At a table upon which rests a curious looking piece of apparatus sits Alexander Graham Bell, and stretching to the far corner of the room are three hundred feet of wire. Before the table stands a group of distinguished judges, whose business it is to pass upon the various exhibits of the Exposition. Among them are eminent officials of the Government, prominent business men, learned professors and expert inventors. We see the venerable Joseph Henry, America's foremost scientist and the first Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution, and Lord Kelvin, whose genius has but recently made possible the success of the first Atlantic cable. Tired and hungry, the

judges loudly proclaim their desire to return to their respective hotels. One of the number walks up to the table, picks up the crude device, fingers it listlessly and puts it down. Another says, "What if the voice can be sent over a wire, of what use can that be?" The judges laugh and are about to pass on. Bell seems doomed to lose the supreme opportunity for which he has waited through so many weeks. But, no. Fate is not to be so cruel. Just then arrives one of the dramatic moments of history. Suddenly, there appears upon the scene a prince in the garb of a medieval monarch, followed by a gaily attired band of courtiers. Don Pedro of Brazil recognizes Bell as his old master in Boston. Yes, Don Pedro is interested. He will listen. Quickly, he steps to the far-end of the line. He raises the receiver to his ear, and, as Bell speaks, he drops it in amazement with the exclamation, "My God, it talks!" What a scene for the brush of a master artist—there in the gathering twilight, those judges, awed and silent witnesses of this miracle of invention, the touch of medieval coloring, and crowning it all, those words, as it were, from another world. May we not believe "There's a divinity that shapes our ends, rough hew them how we will?"

No longer tired and hungry, one by one the judges come forward to listen to this newest marvel of the creative genius of man. We see Joseph Henry place the receiver to his ear and then, as he turns to his associates, hear him, in a faltering voice say, "Gentlemen, this comes the nearest to overthrowing

the law of the conservation of energy of anything I have ever seen." But it does not do that. Indeed, it is because of that very law that the telephone became possible. Because the slight energy in the human breath is not lost, it is now possible to hurl the voice from ocean to ocean. What lawless wonder of the ancient past, even if it were true, could compare with this miracle of modern science and invention?

December 12, 1901, finds us on the rock-bound coast of Newfoundland. In an upper room of an old barracks sit two men. Some crude apparatus connects a kite aerial with a ground wire. Outside a storm rages, while three hundred feet below the surf breaks in a mighty roar and beyond roll two thousand miles of sea. Marconi has been listening for half an hour, but no result. He passes the receivers to his friend. The little room with its two occupants is tense with expectancy. Will the crucial test fail? Ah no, there it comes—the three dots of the letter "S" telling that transoceanic wireless is an accomplished fact. We behold a supreme example of man's unconquerable faith in a world of law and order—a faith which has never yet received a negative answer.

On Armistice Day, 1921, sitting in Madison Square Garden, we hear President Harding, speaking at Arlington over the body of the Unknown Soldier, say, "We are met to-day to pay an impersonal tribute. The name of him whose body lies before us took flight with his imperishable soul. We

know not whence he came but only that his death marks him with the everlasting glory of an American dying for his country." Newly invented loud-speaking telephones catch the voices and the music and the peals of guns at Arlington and amplify them for reverent thousands on either oceanside. Following the reading of Scripture and the prayer, to which we listened as well as though we were in our own churches, the vast audience in San Francisco unites with that in New York and with the hundred thousand at Arlington in repeating the Lord's Prayer and in singing *America*. Beside that matchless triumph of invention, all the miracles of the ages pale into insignificance.

Above the windswept sand dunes at Kitty Hawk, North Carolina, on December 17, 1903, we see the Wrights guide the first successful, man-carrying, heavier-than-air machine on its initial flight. I never look up at one of these majestic monarchs of the skies, riding the billows of the air as a mighty ship rides the billows of the sea, without recalling that miracle of modern prophecy recorded in the lines of Lord Tennyson, written in 1840:

"For I dipt into the future, far as human eye could see,
Saw the Vision of the world, and all the wonder that would be;
Saw the heavens fill with commerce, argosies of magic sails,
Pilots of the purple twilight, dropping down with costly bales;

Heard the heavens fill with shouting, and there rain'd a ghastly dew
From the nations' airy navies grappling in the central blue;
Far along the world-wide whisper of the south-wind rushing warm,
With the standards of the peoples plunging thro' the thunder-storm;
Till the war-drum throbb'd no longer, and the battle-flags were furl'd
In the parliament of man, the Federation of the world.
There the common sense of most shall hold a fretful realm in awe,
And the kindly earth shall slumber, lapt in universal law."*

Let us go to a little room in a Paris hospital in the year 1885. We see an old man, old before his time in the service of his country and in the cause of suffering humanity, keeping anxious watch over the still form of a peasant lad. Eagerly, he watches every symptom. For two weeks he has scarcely eaten or slept. Life is precious to him and this is to be his crowning achievement in snatching men from death. Will the treatment fail, or will the new-found vaccine with which he has inoculated the lad's veins bring the dread malady of rabies under the control of preventive medicine, even as anthrax and other contagious diseases have been? The answer is written large in letters of living light, for the boy lives and all the world has learned to bless the name of Louis Pasteur, father of the germ theory of dis-

Locksley Hall.

ease and, with Lord Lister across the Channel, one of the first apostles of antiseptic surgery. May we not believe that Louis Pasteur came to earth that men might have life and have it more abundantly? Before such miracles of restored life as were wrought by this man of science all the fabricated raisings of the dead of ancient times become as dust in the balance.

At about the same time that Pasteur in France is fighting his heroic battle for the preservation of life, an obscure country physician in Germany, experimenting with guinea-pigs and rabbits and dead men's bodies, is isolating the tuberculosis bacillus. This modest, unassuming searcher after truth, who has already discovered the microbe that causes anthrax and who is destined to trace to his lair the microscopic beast that induces Asiatic cholera, is Robert Koch. On March 24, 1882, we see him before the Physiological Society in Berlin telling the most eminent men of science in Germany there assembled all about the habits of this tuberculosis villain, which takes a larger toll of human life than does any other enemy of the race. Koch did not prescribe a specific remedy. That remains to be done. But he did point the way to the fighting of this insidious foe in the open. His name will forever be enshrined among the real miracle workers of the ages.

And now the scene shifts to Havana, Cuba. It is just two years since the Spanish-American War. Yellow fever has already killed more American soldiers than all the bullets of the Spaniards. On

June 25, 1900, we see Major Walter Reed arrive at Quemados with orders from Washington to "give special attention to questions relating to the cause and prevention of yellow fever." No one knows the source of this ravager of human life. Men only know that the folk of a town suddenly and without warning begin to turn yellow and hiccup and vomit and then to die like flies. A suspicion is abroad that an innocent looking mosquito may have something to do with these insidious attacks. Major Reed calls for volunteers. He wishes to test this theory. Immediately, two assistants, James Carroll and Jesse Lazear, present themselves. Knowing that a frightful death lurks in the offing, these volunteers, together with seven nameless heroes, subject themselves to the biting of mosquitoes who but a few days before have fed upon the bodies of men now dead. One by one we see these soldiers of fate come down with the dread malady. All lie for days at the point of death. And then Lazear dies. Others die. More experiments follow. Protected from the bites of mosquitoes, men sleep upon the bedding and in the clothing but just recently inhabited by yellow fever victims. Still no one becomes inoculated with the murderous disease. By New Year's Day, 1901, this little group of scientists and their martyr associates have conquered yellow fever. Its cause is known and its extermination is certain. William Crawford Gorgas arrives on the scene and, going into the cisterns and gutters and cesspools of Havana, he makes war upon these deadly mos-

quitoes. For the first time in two hundred years, the city is free, absolutely, of yellow fever. Those brave men who fought that victorious fight with death have saved more life than all the miracle-workers of the centuries.

We might tell the story of Roux and Behring and their discovery of the diptheria antitoxin. And then there is Paul Ehrlich, impetuous searcher after remedies for disease and "crazy" investigator of medical chemistry. Deliberately, step by step, as a sculptor fashions a statue from the marble, we see him build the compound known as "606," the specific cure for the loathsome disease of syphilis. There are wonderful achievements, too, associated with Bruce and the sleeping sickness bug, Grassi and the malaria mosquito and with many more triumphs of medical science, such as Jenner and vaccination and Simpson's discovery of the anesthetic properties of chloroform.

We have passed over the immortal Faraday and those ten years of masterly research in which he laid the foundations for the age of electricity in which we now live. And we should mention Hertz, illustrious pupil of Helmholtz and discoverer of those ether waves which to-day girdle the earth with speech and music. And there is Edison, popular hero of a thousand discoveries and a modern miracle-worker who has put into the shade the most marvelous achievements of the *Arabian Nights*. But the list is too long to complete here. It has grown with the years, and it will continue to do so as time takes flight.

Wherever men have been able to draw aside the veil that hides the mysteries of the universe and to work in harmony with its laws of action, solid achievement has followed. Out of the ashes of an age of imaginary miracles has appeared an edifice of scientific triumphs, more wonderful than the boldest fabricators of impossible feats ever dreamed.

CHAPTER X

MIRACLES AND RELIGION

The question inevitably presents itself, "Will not the destruction of men's belief in miracles injure religious faith?" Most emphatically "No." The dominating purpose of every system of thought or religion is truth. Whatever is untrue is worse than useless. It can not make for progress. The sooner it is cast on the scrap-heap of time-honored fallacies, the better for mankind. A religious faith based in any way upon the superstitions and ignorant beliefs of primitive peoples is to just that extent false and misleading. Only in a state of intellectual immaturity do men need to be fed upon the infant food of error and falsehood. If miracles never happened, if they are notoriously false, why seek to foster faith in them?

The world never made any progress without exercising the liberty of disturbing somebody's faith. If men's faith had never been disturbed, we should still be believing in a flat earth, a solid dome of heaven, in the waters above the firmament, in the Ptolemaic system of astronomy, in demons and witches, in a literal hell of fire and brimstone and in a host of other superstitious beliefs harking back to the childhood cradle of the race. Time and again

the fallibility of human judgment has based religious faith upon the adherence to monstrous views of God and the universe. But one by one these views have gone by the board, and still religion has survived. How men raved over the revelations of Galileo's telescope! And Newton was denounced as an atheist because he had discovered the law of gravitation. Its sway seemed to encroach upon the prerogatives of the imaginative God of man-made theology. Charles Wesley declared that to reject belief in witchcraft would be to destroy faith in the Bible. To disbelieve in the divine significance of thunder and lightning and in the evil portent of comets was heresy, punishable by everlasting condemnation to hell fire. Infant damnation was an article of orthodox religious faith. A God whose code of ethics was no higher than that of a barbarian was once the conception of the most highly developed religious race of the earth. He was then a provincial deity. Not so very long ago, to treat the insane with humanity and compassion was looked upon as contrary to the Divine Will. The advances of modern medicine, anatomy, surgery, hygiene and sanitation were opposed in the name of God. Always have the Fundamentalists to the full extent of their capacity bedeviled the machinery of modern progress. Having been beaten upon a score and more of historic battlefields, just now, in their benighted ignorance, they are basing the salvation of mankind upon the rooting out of the blasphemous heresy of evolution and upon establishing forever and a day

the infantile belief in the occurrence of impossible miraculous events. But their predecessors once maintained with equal rigor and vigor that the earth does not move.

Before a skyscraper is erected, the rubbish must be cleared away and a secure foundation established. The pyramids of ancient Egypt were not built upon quicksand. No more can religious faith be rested upon anything less secure than eternal truth. If it is, it will receive utter and complete annihilation. No false belief is ever worth preservation. Even as a crutch, it is worse than useless. It is indicative of a neurotic state of racial development. If miracles are false, and intellectual honesty compels us to believe that they are, then in the name of truth and honor let us forget them. Why should any group of religious leaders wish to court the merited ridicule and contempt of thinking men by clinging to the outgrown dogmas of an age of ignorance and superstition?

If Jesus was only a man, merely an advanced religious thinker of his time, what harm can come from proclaiming the truth? No true progress can result from teaching anything to the contrary. To believe so is an utter delusion. Deep down in their souls, how many of the rank and file of men to-day actually believe in the sort of Christ portrayed by orthodox theology? To how many of them does the miracle-working, supernatural deity of the Gospel fictions really appeal as a man whom they may strive to emulate? Men do not worship that kind of

a Christ. The much heralded progress of Christianity is not the result of that sort of worship. It can not be otherwise, for the orthodox picture of Christ is not true. As we have seen, there is not a particle of evidence for believing that he was God in human form. If he had been the Supreme Deity of the universe in the guise of man, does it not seem most amazing strange that the religion which he came to establish has made relatively such an incomplete conquest? It numbers fewer adherents than does Buddhism and not many more than Mohammedanism. Above all else, the spectacle of Christ in the false garb of a miracle-working magician is repellent and nauseous to all who have respect for intellectual integrity. The preaching of such a Christ is one of the most potent influences at work to drive men into the camp of agnosticism. Outside of orthodox circles, men look with contempt upon such a gross misconception of the manifest truth of history. Those of an emotional temperament and those who do not think the proposition through may profess to believe in such a being. Many may remain in a confused and bewildered state of thought. But the clear-thinking intellectual has no difficulty in coming to an accurate estimate of the wealth of the miraculous surrounding this man of mystery. I am well aware that some of the most intellectual leaders of men are in the church, but deep down in their souls, if they are honest with themselves, they do not believe in that sort of a Christ. Thousands of thoughtful people everywhere

instinctively reject this picture of a Christ, clothed in the garments of paganism, and descending to the level of a heathen wonder-worker.

And now as to the rising generation, the youth of the land—I know that I shall be denounced for leading them "astray." But the truth can never lead any one astray. I am outlining the only plan whereby young people may be kept within the fold of the church. The simple fact is that we can not continue to teach the theology of medievalism in a modern world. A generation which is coming into a knowledge of the truths of science can no longer be fed with the myths and legends of an age of ignorance. To attempt to do so only excites their contempt for all religion and drives them from the church. That is the fundamental fact that every Fundamentalist would do well to ponder thoughtfully and long. If Fundamentalists wish to preserve the present church as a virile factor of civilization, every vestige of ignorance and superstition must be rooted from its creed and faith. How many, for instance, who repeat the Apostles' Creed actually believe the dogmas which they so gliby voice? In the interest of my own self-respect, I long since ceased to join in that declaration of pagan imagery. That fossilization of ancient miraculous belief is as out of place in religious instruction to-day as is the Ptolemaic system of astronomy in science. And furthermore, young people know it. With them, miracle stories and theological dogma fall upon deaf ears. They thrust the whole mass of such stuff out of their minds as so much rubbish. And often the

religion which allows this ignorant superstition to occupy so large a place in its forms and creeds is thrust out along with it.

Nothing could do more to strengthen religious faith among young people, than to divorce religion from all pretence to a false belief in the miraculous and the supernatural. The clergy could then preach with the conviction of truth. "Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free." With that as the burning message of a new evangelism, men would rally to the support of the church as never before in its history. Let ministers preach Jesus as the man that he was, let them frankly confess that the Bible is a very human document, that it is by no means an infallible book, that it has borrowed prodigiously from paganism, that it is in no sense a record of direct revelation from on High, that its science is wholly imaginary, that its miracles are pure fictions, that the Gospels are unhistorical—in short let the church proclaim the truth, and a new renaissance of religious zeal would flood the hearts of men. As never before in its history, the church right now, at the close of the first quarter of this twentieth century of enlightenment, needs a reconsecration, a rebirth, a new baptism of the spirit of truth, of reason, of candor, of frankness and of intellectual honesty. In no other way can the church retain its hold upon the enlightened youth of this and other lands. Only those who remain in ignorance will cling to the old creeds. And why should the church place a premium upon ignorance? If it continues to do so, it deserves to perish. If the

clergy are ignorant of the researches of science and the findings of scholarship, as many of them are, they must be educated. Only thus can they become trustworthy guides of youthful minds.

It may be asked, "What may we believe?" We may believe in God as the Divine Immanence of the universe, the Thought, the Purpose and the Intelligence from which creation forever springs anew. We may believe with an unfaltering faith in the immortality of the soul. We may believe in certain great leaders who, catching a larger vision of the eternal truth than their fellows, have pointed men to better ways to live. We may believe in the integrity of the universe, in the perfect working of natural law, in the complete absence of miracle from a normal world, in the evolution of solar systems and living organisms, and in a "power not ourselves that makes for righteousness." We may believe in the absolute working of the law of retribution, both here and hereafter. We may believe that sometime somewhere a noble life will find its reward. What higher code need one have than faith in God and immortality and belief in the punishment of evil and the reward of virtue?

Not until men have rid their minds of the last lingering vestige of any sort of a belief in the miraculous can they be said to have emerged from the stage of racial adolescence and entered upon that of intellectual maturity. Such a step must register progress, not retrogression. To establish the majesty of truth in the place of falsehood can do no possible injury to any man.

THE END

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Miracles and Christianity, Johannes Wendland.
Miracles of the New Testament, A. C. Headlam.
The Resurrection of Jesus Christ, K. Lake.
The Resurrection of Jesus, James Orr.
Jesus and the Gospel, James Dewey.
Miracles in the New Testament, J. M. Thompson.
Jesus, the Christ, in the Light of Psychology, G. Stanley Hall.
Life of Christ, Ernest Renan.
Life of Jesus, D. Strauss.
Historicity of Jesus, S. J. Case.
Quest of the Historical Jesus, Schweitzer.
The Resurrection, Furness.
Origin of the New Testament, Wrede.
Miracles of Jesus, Lang.
Miracle in St. John's Gospel, Gilbert.
Pagan Christs, J. M. Robertson.
Jesus, George H. Gilbert.
What We Know about Jesus, Charles F. Dole.
Religion and Miracle, George A. Gordon.
Miracles and the New Psychology, E. R. Micklem.
Miracles of King Henry VI, edited by R. A. Knox and S. Leslie.
Miracles in the Light of Science and History, A. Huelster.
Miracle and Its Philosophical Presuppositions, F. R. Tennant.
Counterfeit Miracles, B. B. Warfield.
Dictionary of Miracles, E. Cobham Brewer.
Bible Myths and their Parallels in Other Religions, T. W. Doane.
Conflict between Religion and Science, J. W. Draper.
A History of the Warfare of Science with Theology, A. D. White.
Life and Miracles of St. William of Norwich, Jessop and James.

Rationalism in Europe, W. E. H. Lecky.
History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, Edward Gibbon.
Life and Times of Thomas Becket, James A. Froude.
St. Thomas of Canterbury, His Death and Miracles, Edwin A. Abbott.
Free Enquiry, Vol. I, Conyers Middleton.
Psychological Phenomena of Christianity, G. B. Cutter.
Intellectual Development of Europe, J. W. Draper.
Antiquities of the Christian Church, Bingham.
Legends of Israel, Lewis Johnson.
Folklore of the Old Testament, Sir James G. Frazer.
The Golden Bough, Sir James G. Frazer.
Myth, Ritual and Religion, Andrew Lang.
Christianity and Mythology, J. M. Robertson.
Legends of the Patriarchs and Prophets, S. Baring-Gould.
Age of Fable, T. Bulfinch.
Angel-Messiah, E. Bunsen.
Mythology among the Hebrews, I. Goldziher.
Asiatic Researches.
New Panthenon, J. Bell.
Anacalypsis, G. Higgins.
Ancient Ecclesiastical History, Eusebius.
Progress of Religious Ideas, L. M. Child.
Indian Antiquities, Thomas Maurice.
A Question of Miracles, Loren H. Whitney.
Zoroaster, Loren H. Whitney.
Zoroaster, the Prophet of Ancient Iran, A. V. Williams Jackson.
Life and Legend of Zoroaster, F. Justi.
Story of Buddha, Edith Holland.
Buddhism, T. W. Rhys Davids.
Life of Mahommed, James L. Merrick.
Biblical Legends of the Mussulmans, G. Weil.
Modern Use of the Bible, H. E. Fosdick.
Cures, J. J. Walsh.
Medical Proof of the Miraculous, E. Le Bec.
Miracles of Healing, Charles W. Waddle, American Journal of Psychology, Vol. 20, p. 221.
Wonder of Lourdes, John Oxenham.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Science and Christian Tradition, T. H. Huxley.
Religion and the Mind of To-day, Joseph A. Leighton.
Evolution of Religions, Everard Bierer.
Rosicrucian Cosmo-Conception, Max Heindel.
Christianity as Mystical Fact, Rudolf Steiner.
Knowledge of the Higher Worlds and Its Attainment, Rudolf Steiner.
Discussion of Miracles, Borden P. Bowne, HARVARD THEOLOGICAL REVIEW, April, 1910.
Myths and Myth-Makers, John Fiske.

INDEX

INDEX

Aaron, 65
Adonis, 136
Æsculapius, 46, 92, 112, 116, 127, 136
Ahriman, 27, 162
Ahura Mazda, 29
Alexander the Great, 92, 127
Amphiaraus, 138
Anne de Beaupré, St., 218
Apocryphal Gospels, 173, 181
Apollo, 74, 124, 160, 175
Apollonius, 46, 92, 112
Archimedes, 107
Aristotle, 19
Artemis, 14
Ascension, 128, 180
Asshurbanipal, 50
Assisi, St. Francis of, 215
Astrology, 253
Atonement, 121
Attys, 123, 136
Augustine, St., 194, 213
Augustus Cæsar, 92, 127
Avatars, 33, 98
Avesta, 27

Babel, Tower of, 58
Babylonian tablets, 50
Bacchus, 46, 65, 92, 105, 124, 137, 175
Bacon, Roger, 58, 209, 252
Balaam, 76
Balder, 138
Becket, 197
Behring, Emile, 270
Bell, Alexander Graham, 263
Belshazzar, 81
Bethesda, Pool of, 114
Bethlehem, Star of, 97
Blind, healing of, 115
Brahma, 158
British Museum, 50
Bruce, David, 270
Buddha, 24, 37, 79, 91, 99, 107, 127, 136

Carroll, James, 269
Catholics, 210
Catholic Church, miracles of, 211
Cavendish, 253
Celsus, 165, 187
Christ, 24, 36, 39, Ch. IV
Cicero, 46, 122, 222
Columbus, 63, 209
Commandments of the Law, 68, 73
Confucius, 24
Constantinople, Council of, 158
Copernicus, 252
Coué, 241
Crucifixion, miracles of, 126
Curie, Madame, 247, 259
Cyrus, King, 92

Daniel, 80
Darius, the Mede, 81
Darwin, 62
David, 80, 95, 173

Davis, Andrew Jackson, 235
Davy, 253
Deluge, 50, 56
Divine Immanence, 85
Docetes, 94
Dowie, 47, 240
Duncan, Robert Kennedy, 249, 258
Durasrobo, 28

Easter, 138
Ebionites, 93
Eddy, Mary Baker, 237
Edison, Thomas A., 270
Ehrlich, Paul, 270
Egypt, 19
Elijah, 31, 77, 117
Elisha, 31, 77
Essenes, 222
Ether, 261
Evolution, 20
Exodus, 64

Faraday, 253, 270
Fo, 159
Franklin, Benjamin, 233, 252
Frazer, Sir James George, 17
Froude, 198, 200
Fundamentalists, 167, 209, 224, 273, 276

Gadarene swine, 110
Galen, 235
Galileo, 12, 62, 209, 251, 273
Gassner, Pfarrer, 231
Golden Bough, The, 17
Gorgas, William Crawford, 269
Grassi, de, 270
Greek mythology, 19

Harding, President, 265
Healing, miracles of, 111, 225, Ch. VIII
Hell, Maximilian, 231
Helmholtz, 270
Henry, Joseph, 264
Heraclitus, 161
Hercules, 54, 74, 99, 138
Hermes, 124
Herod, 28, 99
Herodotus, 74
Herschel, Sir William, 257
Hertz, Heinrich, 270
Horus, 92, 99, 123, 136, 166

Immanence, Divine, 85
Indian Vedas, 14
Indra, 14
Inspiration, 62, 106
Irenæus, 94

Jarius, daughter of, 117
Jesus, 24, 42, Chs. IV and V
Jonah, 75, 105, 128
Joseph, 174
Josephus, 60, 164
Joshua, 76
Julius Cæsar, 92
Justus of Tiberias, 164

Kepler, 209, 252
Koch, Robert, 268
Krishna, 24, 33, 79, 91, 120, 123, 126, 135

Lamarck, 62
Lao-Kiun, 136
Lavoisier, 253
Lazarus, 118, 133, 164
Lazear, Jesse, 269
Lecky, 191, 193
Leper, healing of, 115
Leverrier, 257
Lincoln, Abraham, 62, 102
Lister, Lord, 268
Loaves and fishes, 106

Lockyer, Sir Norman, 258
Lodge, Sir Oliver, 249
Logos, 160
Lycurgus, 74

Magellan, 63, 209
Magi, 25
Magic, 15
Magician, Christ as, 108, 165
Magnus, Simon, 46
Mahomet, 24, 42
Malchus' ear, 115
Manna, 72
Mara, 40
Marconi, 265
Martyr, Justin, 92, 112, 156, 161, 165
Mary, Virgin, 173, 219
Mazda, Ahura, 29
Memnon, 138
Memory of Nature, 147
Memra, 160
Mendeléeff, 258
Mercury, 161
Mesmer, 232
Middle Ages, 185
Middleton, Conyers, 182, 187, 193
Minos, 74
Miracles of Catholic Church, Ch. VII
  crucifixion, 126
  healing, 111, 225, Ch. VIII
  Jesus, 102
  New Testament, Ch. IV
  Old Testament, Ch. III
  science, 256
Mithras, 124, 136, 162
Morse, Samuel F. B., 262
Moses, 24, 64, 206
Myths, 14, 77

Nain, youth of, 118
Nebuchadnezzar, 81
Neptune, discovery of, 257
Newton, 62, 209, 252, 273
Nicea, Council of, 158
Nirvana, 26

Ormuzd, 162
Orpheus, 65, 161
Osiris, 20, 123, 136, 222

Passion Play, 138
Pasteur, 62, 102, 267
Paul, 101, 140, 155, 165
Perkins, Elisha, 234
Perkins, Sir William, 261
Perseus, 92, 99
Peter, 39, 121
Pharaoh, 65, 70, 206
Pharisees, 166
Pillar of cloud and fire, 72
Pilate, 178
Plagues of Egypt, 69
Plato, 160
Pliny, 27, 164
Priestley, 253
Prometheus, 123, 127
Protestants, 214
Protovangelion, 100
Pythagoras, 92, 161, 223

Quetzalcoatl, 138
Quimby, Phineas, 236
Quirinius, 127

Radium, 247
Rainbow, 58, 252
Ramsay, Sir William, 258
Rebirth and consequence, law of, 146
Red Sea, 71
Reed, Major Walter, 269

INDEX

Reformation, 185
Reincarnation, 146
Relics, 216, 226
Religion, miracles and, 272
Remus, 99
Resurrection from dead, 117
Resurrection of Jesus, 128
Retribution, law of, 147
Risen Christ, 142
Roman Empire, 164
Romulus, 92, 99, 127
Rosicrucian philosophy, 145
Roux, Emile, 270
Royal touch, 229

Samson, 74
Savage mind, 15
Savonarola, 62
Scheele, 253
Schlatter, 241
Serapis, 124
Shakespeare, 62
Siva, 158
Smith, George, 50
Story of Creation, 49
Story of the Fall, 52
Stigmatization, 215
Suetonius, 164
Swedenborg, 235

Tacitus, 163
Talmud, 164
Tennyson, 62, 266
Thomas, St. of Canterbury, 197
Tiberias, Sea of, 131
Transfiguration, 108
Transubstantiation, 222
Tree of Life, 52, 174, 179
Tri-murti, 158
Trinity, 36, 152, 156

Unknown Soldier, 265
Uranus, 257

Virgin birth, 92
Vishnu, 33
Vishu Purana, 34, 158

Walking on water, miracle of, 107
Water and wine, miracle of, 105, 254
Watt, 262
Wesley, Charles, 273
Wise Men, 25, 98, 175, 228
Withered hand, miracle of, 114
Wrights, 266

Xavier, St. Francis, 207

Zend-Avesta, 51
Zeus, 14, 105
Zoroaster, 24, 25, 79, 91, 99, 136, 175

DATE DUE

Library Store #47-0108 Peel Off Pressure Sensitive

CINCINNATI BIBLE COLLEGE & SEM. LIBRARY
3 4320 00116 9822

G.M. ELLIOTT LIBRARY
Cincinnati Christian University

THE CINCINNATI BIBLE

GRAD REF 231.73 D254m
Ac. #13929
Darrow, Floyd L.

Miracles, a modern view